ECLECTIC ENGLISH CLASSICS

MILTON'S MINOR POEMS

BUCK

1BD-00787 Melozzo da Forlì / Superstock, Inc.

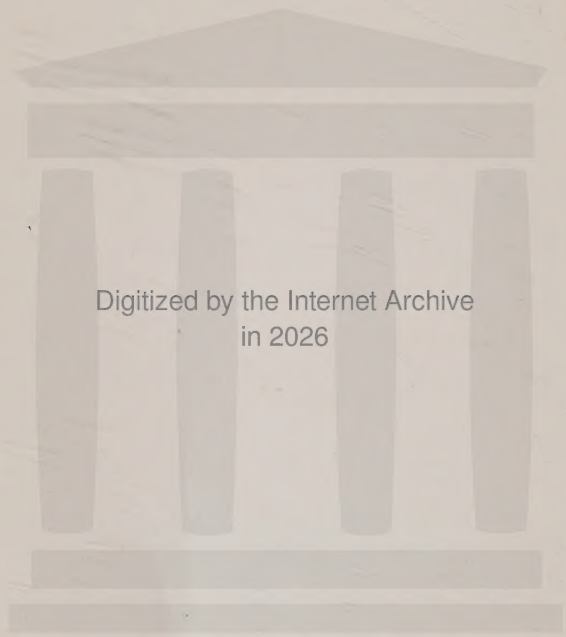
From the library of
Dolphine Lemon
Marschick

Pay for book.

40
of

Ariel Rae Pfeiffer.

Montgomery High School
Mieker Ohio.



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026

https://archive.org/details/lallegroilpenser0000phil

ECLECTIC ENGLISH CLASSICS

MILTON'S

L'ALLEGRO, IL PENSEROSO COMUS, AND LYCIDAS

EDITED BY

PHILO MELVYN BUCK, JR.

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF RHETORIC, UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA

NEW YORK ·:· CINCINNATI ·:· CHICAGO

AMERICAN BOOK COMPANY

Copyright, 1894 and 1911, by
AMERICAN BOOK COMPANY

MILTON
W. P. 15

INTRODUCTION.

JOHN MILTON was born in London in 1608. He was educated at Christ's College, Cambridge, where he graduated in 1632. While yet a student, he wrote several of his shorter poems, and the hymn "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity." Between 1632 and 1638 he wrote "Arcades," "Comus," "Lycidas," "L'Allegro," and "Il Penseroso." In 1638 he visited France and Italy, returning to England in the following year. From that time until after the restoration of Charles II., in 1660, he published no poetry, but was actively engaged in political controversy, or occupied with his official duties as Latin secretary to Cromwell. His greatest work, "Paradise Lost," begun in 1658, was published in 1665. "Paradise Regained" and "Samson Agonistes" were both published in 1671. Milton died in 1674.

In the four poems comprising this volume we have the best of the earlier works of John Milton. No criticism of them has been more widely accepted than the statement that they proved, upon their first appearance, that another true poet had arisen in England. Written between the years 1632 and 1638, when great questions of Church and State were disturbing the minds of the English people, and preparing the way for the Puritan Revolution which very soon followed, they naturally reflect in some

measure the spirit of the times. In the heroic age of Elizabeth, which had just passed away, each subject had seemed to feel that he must uphold the honor of the English name at any cost. The influence of the spirit of chivalry had bound men together in the common ties of loyalty and national pride, and was apparent not more in the heroic achievements of Raleigh and of Drake than in the immortal works of Shakespeare and of Spenser. But now, under the tyranny of Charles I., and amid the rapid growth of commercial influences, the ennobling sentiments which had formerly shaped men's actions were being gradually stifled. The bonds of unfaltering loyalty and unquestioning obedience were being forced asunder by the opposition which royal despotism had aroused; and every thinking mind was being swayed by religious unrest, or was seeking refuge in dogmatic assertion and ecclesiastical authority. Even in literature a great change was apparent; "for a reaction had taken place from poetical impulse and heroic achievement to prosaic weariness and worldly wisdom." In order, therefore, to understand the deeper import and meaning of these early poems of Milton, one should enter upon their study with some knowledge of the conditions of life and thought and purpose which prevailed at the time of their composition, and should bear in mind the influence which these must have had upon the poet and his utterances.

John Milton graduated from Christ's College, Cambridge, in 1632, when twenty-four years of age. During the six years which followed, he remained in his father's home at Horton, Buckinghamshire; and it was there that he wrote these poems. One might have supposed that the courtly manners of his early home, his musical tastes, and the teachings of his father would have bred in him a disinclination for the strict, self-denying life

of Puritanism. But he could not be oblivious to the underlying excellence of the Puritan doctrines, or neglectful of the demands of the times. To him, Duty was ever "the stern daughter of the voice of God."

In "L'Allegro" (The Cheerful Man) and "Il Penseroso" (The Thoughtful Man) Milton presents, for his own contemplation and ours, pictures of the two paths which seemed at that time to open before him,—the life of a Courtier or Cavalier, and the life of a Puritan. He gives Italian titles to these poems, perhaps because there are no English equivalents which are exactly applicable to his ideals. In the first instance, to say "A Mirthful Man" would suggest a character too shallow or too frivolous, while the expression "A Cheerful Man" would fail to convey his entire meaning; in the other case, to write of "A Thoughtful Man" would call up the image of a student or a philosopher, and lead to a hasty misjudgment of the intent of the poem.

Each poem describes the pursuits and pleasures of twelve hours. L'Allegro is introduced to us at the first peep of dawn, listening to the cheerful song of the lark, the cockcrowing, and the music of the huntsman's horn; then the fieldworkers are observed at their various tasks; the landscape, with its ever changing beauties, delights the eye; the humble cottage and the lordly castle each contributes a picture to the scene; and when the day's duties are at an end, the evening is spent in social delights, in story-telling, in the reading of Jonson's comedies or Shakespeare's "wood-notes wild," or in listening to soft strains of music,

> "Untwisting all the chains that tie
> The hidden soul of harmony."

Il Penseroso starts out in the early evening hours; he listens to the song of the nightingale, or, as he walks in the moonlight, hears the far-off curfew sound; he spends the evening in the contemplation of the great tragedies of antiquity, or devotes the later hours of the night to the study of the mysteries of life and immortality; and with the break of day he betakes himself to some quiet nook in the woods, or listens, under the "high-embowed roof" of church or cathedral, to the ecstatic music of full-voiced choir and pealing organ.

Thus Mirth and Seriousness each finds its own enjoyments in life; but it is plain that the poet's sympathies are with the latter. Perhaps, all unwitting to himself, he thus intimates the ultimate choice of his life,—to ally himself with the seriousness of Puritanism rather than permit the mirth of the Cavaliers to tempt him from the plain path of duty. Both poems are nature lyrics, with a reflective background which the reader must discover for himself. Strictly speaking, they are not descriptive poems; for "the charm of nature poetry is not its description—its rivalry with a painting of the scene; it is the suggestive power of objects to stimulate the imagination." It is in this quality that the beauty and excellence of these two poems is chiefly to be found.

"Comus," the third poem in this collection, is a dramatic composition,—"a fine example of the high literary masque." This species of drama, which is of Italian origin, was introduced into England as early as the reign of Henry VIII., and when "Comus" was written it was in the height of its popularity. It combined lyric poetry, declamation, dialogue, music, and dancing, the whole being set off with elaborate scenery. When, as in this case, the literary element predominated, the performance was much like

that of an ordinary drama; but when the poem was subordinate to the scenery, the result was a pageant.

"Comus" was written for presentation at Ludlow Castle, Shropshire, on Michaelmas night, 1634, the occasion being the induction of the Earl of Bridgewater into the office of Lord President of Wales, to which he had been appointed some three years before. Henry Lawes, a distinguished musical composer, had been intrusted with the preparation of an entertainment, or masque, to be performed in connection with the other festivities of the evening, and it was at his request that Milton undertook the composition of the poem. The leading parts in the play — those of the Lady and her Brothers — were taken by the Earl of Bridgewater's three children, while the part of the Attendant Angel was performed by Lawes himself. The names of those who personated Comus and Sabrina have not been preserved. The presentation took place in the great hall of Ludlow Castle, on a stage erected for the purpose at one end of the room.

The story which the play brings out is said to have had some foundation in fact. There is a popular tradition, still extant in Shropshire, to the effect that the three children of the Earl of Bridgewater were actually overtaken by nightfall and separated from one another in Haywood Forest near Ludlow. "If this ever took place, and news of it reached Milton's ears, then he simply dramatized the episode; but it is far more probable that the legend, which dates from the last century, grew out of the masque, than *vice versâ*."

In the writing of this masque Milton borrowed suggestions and ideas from many sources. The main incidents of the story are almost identical with those related in a play entitled "The Old Wives' Tale" by George Peele, published nearly forty years

before. Comus, as the personification of revelry, appears in Ben Jonson's masque of "Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue" (published in 1619), where he is apostrophized as

> "The founder of taste
> For fresh meats, or powdered, or pickled, or paste;
> An emptier of cups."

He also appears in a Latin play, entitled "Comus," written by Hendrik van der Putten, a Dutch professor at Louvain, and republished at Oxford in 1634. With this play as well as with Jonson's masque, Milton was no doubt familiar. In the writing of the last part of the poem—the disenchantment scene—he owed not a little to Fletcher's pastoral drama, "The Faithful Shepherdess," which was very popular in the London theaters in 1633. In other passages the influence of earlier poets, and especially of Spenser, is plainly apparent. But whatever he may have borrowed, Milton infused into it new life and a new charm, not only presenting it in a highly improved form, but breathing into it the breath of fresh suggestion.

The poem, besides having an obvious moral signification, was probably intended by Milton to admit of a deep allegorical interpretation. In it may be seen the influence of Spenser's "Faerie Queene" upon the thought and literary methods of the poet. Did he intend Comus to represent the corrupt influences of the then existing Court and Church, and the Lady and her friends to personify Virtue and her champions? Or did he intend to portray the conflict which is waged between Body and Soul, resulting finally in the complete triumph of the higher nature over the lower? "The bare fact that Milton wrote 'Comus' showed that he had not yet gone over to help the party which bore an unrea-

soning hatred of all amusements. On the other hand, the whole tone of the poem was a rebuke to the seekers of mere pleasure. The revel god personified the worst elements of court life. In his overthrow Milton allegorically foreshadowed the downfall of those who led that life. Two hundred and fifty years ago 'Comus' was terribly real, as a warning against the danger upon which the ship of national life was drifting. But the theme is true yesterday, to-day, and forever; and the art with which it is set off remains undimmed, the wisdom unfading." (VERITY.)

"Lycidas," the fourth and last poem in the collection, is Milton's tribute to his college friend and companion, Edward King. Milton and King had studied and written together, and their tastes and pursuits were in many respects identical. After graduation, King had remained at Cambridge, first as fellow, then as tutor, with the expectation of soon being ordained for the Church. In 1637 he embarked on a vessel at Chester, intending to go over into Ireland, to spend the long vacation with his relatives there. When hardly out to sea, in calm weather, the vessel foundered upon a rock, and nearly all on board were drowned. In the same autumn, King's friends at Cambridge published a volume of verses dedicated to his memory, and to this volume Milton contributed "Lycidas."

The poem begins with the intimation that only grief for his dead friend had induced the poet to forego a resolution not to write more until he should be better able to attain to the high ideal he had chosen. In pastoral allegory he refers briefly to their common tasks and pursuits, and represents all nature as bewailing the loss of Lycidas. Yet the reflection that naught could interpose to save his friend induces Milton to question the wisdom of

human toil and aspiration. What is fame? Is it not a vain infirmity? But then he is reminded that true fame is of no earthly growth, and that Heaven alone can declare what shall be the reward of man's work. Then, returning to his grief for Lycidas, he listens to Triton, who makes inquiry concerning the cause of the shipwreck; to Camus, asking mournfully who has bereft him of his dearest pledge; and to St. Peter, bewailing the loss of so promising a youth. This leads him into another digression, wherein he rebukes the worldliness and greed of the clergy of the time, and by implication foretells their downfall. Then the poet resumes his strain, bidding all the flowers of wood and plain to bring their tribute to the memory of Lycidas; and finally he is persuaded that the youth is not dead, but has been transported to "the blest kingdoms meek of joy and love," and will live henceforth as the Genius of the shore. The shepherds are bidden to dry their tears; and the poet declares that other subjects of thought and effort shall hereafter claim his attention—

"To-morrow to fresh woods and pastures new."

"He who wishes to know whether he has a true taste for poetry or not, should consider whether he is highly delighted or not with the perusal of Milton's 'Lycidas.'" These are the words of Milton's enthusiastic critic and biographer, Mark Pattison. They may be too high praise; but perhaps no poem in the English language has compressed into so narrow space so much of thought and beauty. It must be read and reread to be appreciated.[1]

[1] For further introductory matter see the end of this volume.

L'ALLEGRO.

HENCE, loathed Melancholy,
  Of Cerberus[1] and blackest Midnight born
In Stygian cave forlorn
  'Mongst horrid shapes, and shrieks, and sights unholy!
Find out some uncouth cell,
  Where brooding Darkness spreads his jealous wings,
And the night raven sings;
  There, under ebon shades and low-browed rocks,
As ragged as thy locks,
  In dark Cimmerian desert[2] ever dwell.
But come, thou Goddess fair and free,
In heaven yclept[3] Euphrosyne,
And by men heart-easing Mirth;
Whom lovely Venus, at a birth,
With two sister Graces[4] more,
To ivy-crownèd Bacchus bore:

[1] Cerberus was the three-headed dog that guarded the entrance to the infernal regions. His den, the "Stygian cave forlorn," was on the farther bank of the river Styx, where the spirits of the dead were landed from Charon's boat. The Styx was the chief river of the lower world.

[2] The country of the Cimmerii, a sunless region on the confines of the lower world, where the spirits of the dead were condemned to sojourn awhile, ere they were admitted into Hades. (See Guerber.)

[3] A corruption of the past participle of the Anglo-Saxon word *clipian* ("to call"). It is frequently used by the older poets.

[4] The three Graces were Euphrosyne (the mirthful), Aglaia (the bright), and Thalia (the blooming). Classical writers do not agree as to their parentage. That they were the daughters of Venus (love) and Bacchus (good

Or whether (as some sager sing)[1]
The frolic wind that breathes the spring,
Zephyr, with Aurora playing,
As he met her once a-Maying,[2]
There, on beds of violets blue,
And fresh-blown roses washed in dew,
Filled her with thee, a daughter fair,
So buxom, blithe, and debonair.
Haste thee, Nymph, and bring with thee
Jest, and youthful Jollity,
Quips and cranks and wanton wiles,
Nods and becks and wreathèd smiles,
Such as hang on Hebe's[3] cheek,
And love to live in dimple sleek;
Sport that wrinkled Care derides,
And Laughter holding both his sides.
Come, and trip it, as you go,
On the light fantastic toe;
And in thy right hand lead with thee
The mountain nymph, sweet Liberty;[4]
And, if I give thee honor due,
Mirth, admit[5] me of thy crew,

cheer), or perhaps rather of Zephyr (the "frolic wind") and Aurora (the morning) seems best to harmonize with Milton's conception of their character, and especially of that of Euphrosyne (mirth).

1 "As some," etc., i.e., as some wiser (ones) sing.

2 Enjoying the sports of May Day, as was formerly the custom in England. In Old English it was not uncommon to prefix "on" or "a" to a verbal noun after verbs of motion; as in "We go a-fishing."

3 The goddess of youth, and cupbearer to the gods.

4 Note the reason for calling Liberty a mountain nymph. The environment of mountainous regions has doubtless aided in developing physical strength and the desire to use nature's defenses in the maintenance of freedom. Mountainous Switzerland, with its liberty-loving people, may be mentioned as an example.

5 The word "admit" is sometimes equivalent to "permit." Here it probably has its regular meaning.

To live with her, and live with thee,
In unreprovèd pleasures free;
To hear[1] the lark[2] begin his flight,
And, singing, startle the dull night,
From his watchtower in the skies,
Till the dappled dawn doth rise;
Then to come, in spite of sorrow,
And at my window bid good-morrow,
Through the sweetbrier or the vine,
Or the twisted eglantine;
While the cock, with lively din,
Scatters the rear of darkness thin;
And to the stack, or the barn door,
Stoutly struts his dames before:
Oft listening how the hounds and horn
Cheerly rouse the slumbering morn,
From the side of some hoar hill,
Through the high wood echoing shrill:
Sometime walking, not unseen,
By hedgerow elms, on hillocks green,
Right against the eastern gate
Where the great Sun begins his state,
Robed in flames and amber light,
The clouds in thousand liveries dight;
While the plowman, near at hand,
Whistles o'er the furrowed land,
And the milkmaid singeth blithe,
And the mower whets his scythe,
And every shepherd tells his tale[3]

[1] This infinitive, as well as "to come," below, depends upon "admit," in line 38.

[2] The English skylark begins his flight before sunrise, singing as he soars upward, and sometimes passing into the light of the early sunbeams before they have reached the fields and valleys below.

[3] The words "tell" and "tale" are both from the Anglo-Saxon word

Under the hawthorn in the dale.
Straight mine eye hath caught new pleasures,
Whilst the landskip [1] round it measures:
Russet lawns, and fallows gray,
Where the nibbling flocks do stray;
Mountains on whose barren breast
The laboring clouds do often rest;
Meadows trim, with daisies pied;
Shallow brooks, and rivers wide;
Towers and battlements it sees
Bosomed high in tufted trees,
Where perhaps some beauty lies,
The cynosure [2] of neighboring eyes.
Hard by a cottage chimney smokes
From betwixt two aged oaks,
Where Corydon [3] and Thyrsis [3] met
Are at their savory dinner set
Of herbs and other country messes,
Which the neat-handed Phyllis dresses;
And then in haste her bower she leaves,
With Thestylis to bind the sheaves;
Or, if the earlier season lead,
To the tanned haycock in the mead.
Sometimes, with secure delight,
The upland hamlets will invite,
When the merry bells ring round,

tellan, one meaning of which is "to count." The expression "tells his tale" is equivalent to "counts his number (of sheep)."

[1] "Landskip," now spelled "landscape," meant originally "landshape," that is, the shape or general aspect of the country.

[2] An object of great or general interest. The word comes from Cynosura ("the dog's tail"), the constellation of the Lesser Bear, by which the Phœnician mariners guided their course at sea.

[3] Corydon and Thyrsis are favorite names given to shepherds by writers of pastoral poetry. So, also, Phyllis and Thestylis are names often applied to rustic maidens or shepherdesses.

And the jocund rebecks sound
To many a youth and many a maid
Dancing in the checkered shade,
And young and old come forth to play
On a sunshine holiday,
Till the livelong daylight fail:
Then to the spicy nut-brown ale,
With stories told of many a feat,
How Fairy Mab [1] the junkets eat.
She was pinched and pulled, she said;
And he,[2] by Friar's lantern [3] led,
Tells how the drudging goblin sweat
To earn his cream bowl duly set,
When in one night, ere glimpse of morn,
His shadowy flail hath threshed the corn
That ten day-laborers could not end;
Then lies him down, the lubber fiend,[4]

[1] Fairy Mab, or Queen Mab, is the fairy that sends dreams. Read Shakespeare's description of her in Romeo and Juliet, Act i., sc. 4.

[2] The pronouns "she" (line 103) and "he" (line 104) refer to members of the company of youths and maidens mentioned above. The telling of folk-lore legends and fairy tales was a favorite amusement with the country people in Milton's time, and the belief in fairies was very general. These mysterious little beings were supposed to be ever ready to play some trick or work some harm, and every misfortune or deed of mischief that could not be otherwise accounted for, was popularly ascribed to them.

[3] The "Friar's lantern" was probably the will-o'-the-wisp, or, as it is sometimes called, Jack-o'-lantern, — a delusive light which was supposed to be produced by souls broken out from purgatory, or by spirits trying to discover hidden treasures. The "drudging goblin" was Robin Goodfellow, a domestic goblin, who did his tasks secretly by night. "Your grandames, maids, were wont to set a bowl of milk for him for his pains in grinding of malt or mustard and sweeping the house at midnight. His white bread and milk was his standing fee." (REGINALD SCOTT'S *Discoverie of Witchcraft.*)

[4] "In the rustic imagination, Robin Goodfellow was represented as a huge, loutish fellow of great strength, but very lazy." The word "fiend," as used here, means "spirit" or "goblin," without any necessary reference to his malignant character.

And, stretched out all the chimney's length,
Basks at the fire his hairy strength,
And cropful out of doors he flings,
Ere the first cock his matin rings.
Thus done the tales, to bed they creep,
By whispering winds soon lulled asleep.
Towered cities please us then,
And the busy hum of men,[1]
Where throngs of knights and barons bold,
In weeds[2] of peace, high triumphs hold,
With store of ladies, whose bright eyes
Rain influence, and judge the prize
Of wit or arms, while both contend
To win her grace whom all commend.
There let Hymen[3] oft appear
In saffron robe, with taper clear,
And pomp, and feast, and revelry,
With mask and antique pageantry;
Such sights as youthful poets dream
On summer eves by haunted stream.
Then to the well-trod stage anon,
If Jonson's learned sock[4] be on,
Or sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child,

[1] "Towered cities," etc., i.e., taking our leave now of the sleeping rustics, we go to enjoy the scenes and pleasures of city life, the tournament, the theater, and the wedding festival.

[2] From Anglo-Saxon, *waed* ("clothing").

[3] The god of marriage. He is represented in poetry as dressed in a saffron-colored robe; and in works of art, as bearing a torch.

[4] The sock was the low shoe worn by actors of comedy in ancient Greece and Rome; hence the word is used as a symbol of the comic drama. Ben Jonson (English dramatist, 1574–1637) wrote several famous comedies, and the allusion to "Jonson's learned sock" was doubtless intended as a compliment to his learning. Note how happily Milton contrasts Shakespeare, nature's own poet, and master of the romantic drama, with Jonson, the scholarly master of the classical drama.

Warble his native wood-notes wild.
And ever, against eating cares.
Lap me in soft Lydian [1] airs,
Married [2] to immortal verse,
Such as the meeting [3] soul may pierce,
In notes with many a winding bout
Of linkèd sweetness long drawn out
With wanton heed and giddy cunning,
The melting voice through mazes running,
Untwisting all the chains that tie
The hidden soul of harmony;
That Orpheus' [4] self may heave his head
From golden slumber on a bed
Of heaped Elysian [5] flowers, and hear
Such strains as would have won the ear
Of Pluto to have quite set free
His half-regained Eurydice.
These delights if thou canst give,
Mirth, with thee I mean to live.

[1] The soft, voluptuous music of the Lydians as opposed to the harsher Phrygian or Dorian music. "Lap" is a corruption of the word "wrap," meaning to infold.

[2] Joined inseparably.

[3] Appreciative.

[4] Orpheus was the most famous of all musicians. His wife Eurydice having died, he descended into Hades to bring her back to life. Charmed by the sweetness of his music, Pluto consented that Eurydice should return with him to the upper world, on condition that he should not look back until they were safely outside the bounds of Hades. When almost out, however, Orpheus, forgetting himself, turned around to see if she were coming, and she vanished from his sight.

[5] The Elysian Fields, or Isles of the Blest, were the regions where those who were beloved of the gods dwelt in happiness, wandering among flowers and enjoying all the beauties which delight the senses or the imagination.

IL PENSEROSO.

HENCE, vain deluding Joys,
The brood of Folly without father bred!
How little you bested,[1]
Or fill the fixèd[2] mind with all your toys!
Dwell in some idle brain,
And fancies fond[3] with gaudy shapes possess,[4]
As thick and numberless
As the gay motes that people the sunbeams,
Or likest hovering dreams,
The fickle pensioners of Morpheus'[5] train.
But, hail! thou Goddess[6] sage and holy!
Hail, divinest Melancholy![7]
Whose saintly visage is too bright
To hit the sense of human sight,
And therefore to our weaker view
O'erlaid with black, staid Wisdom's hue;
Black, but such as in esteem
Prince Memnon's[8] sister might beseem,
Or that starred Ethiope queen[9] that strove

1 Help; avail. Used now rarely, and only as a participle.

2 Steady; sober.

3 The word "fond" has here its original meaning, "foolish."

4 Fill, or occupy.

5 Morpheus ("the shaper") was the son of Sleep and the god of Dreams.

6 Compare the characterization of Melancholy which follows with that given in the first ten lines of L'Allegro.

7 Melancholy, with its old significance of seriousness.

8 Memnon, the son of Tithonus and Aurora, was a king of Etniopia, slain by Achilles in the siege of Troy. Although black, he was famed for his beauty. His sister was Hemera.

9 Cassiopeia, Queen of Ethiopia, boasted that the beauty of her daughter Andromeda exceeded that of the Nereids, or sea nymphs. Both mother and

To set her beauty's praise above
The Sea Nymphs, and their powers offended.
Yet thou art higher far descended:
Thee bright-haired Vesta long of yore
To solitary Saturn bore;[1]
His daughter she; in Saturn's reign
Such mixture was not held a stain.
Oft in glimmering bowers and glades
He met her, and in secret shades
Of woody Ida's[2] inmost grove,
Whilst yet there was no fear of Jove.
Come, pensive Nun, devout and pure,
Sober, steadfast, and demure,
All in a robe of darkest grain,[3]
Flowing with majestic train,
And sable stole of cypress lawn[4]
Over thy decent[5] shoulders drawn.
Come; but keep thy wonted state,
With even step, and musing gait,

daughter were "starred," i.e., transferred to the skies as constellations of stars. Cassiopeia is represented in old astronomical prints as a black female figure marked with white stars.

[1] This conception of the parentage of Melancholy is as fanciful as that in L'Allegro of the parentage of Mirth, and is equally original with Milton. Vesta was the goddess of the domestic hearth, and therefore symbolizes quiet contemplation; while Saturn, the son of Heaven (Uranus) and Earth (Terra), represents retirement. By "Saturn's reign" is meant the golden age of the innocence of the human race, while there was "yet no fear of Jove."

[2] There were several mountains called Ida. The one here alluded to is on the island of Crete, and was a favorite trysting place of the gods.

[3] Tyrian purple. The word "grain" was applied to the dried body of an insect (the size of a seed or grain) from which the Tyrian dye was obtained; afterwards it was applied to the dye itself and to the color produced by it.

[4] "Stole of cypress lawn," i.e., robe of crape of the finest kind. The word "cypress," used alone, denotes crape, while lawn denotes the finest quality of cloth.

[5] Comely; graceful.

And looks commercing with the skies,
Thy rapt soul sitting in thine eyes:
There, held in holy passion still,
Forget thyself to marble,[1] till
With a sad leaden downward cast
Thou fix them on the earth as fast.
And join with thee calm Peace and Quiet,
Spare Fast, that oft with gods doth diet,
And hears the Muses[2] in a ring
Aye[3] round about Jove's altar sing;
And add to these retired Leisure,
That in trim gardens takes his pleasure;
But, first and chiefest, with thee bring
Him that yon soars on golden wing,
Guiding the fiery-wheelèd throne,[4]
The Cherub Contemplation;
And the mute Silence hist[5] along,
'Less Philomel[6] will deign a song,
In her sweetest saddest plight,
Smoothing the rugged brow of Night,
While Cynthia[7] checks her dragon yoke

[1] "Forget thyself," etc., i.e., become as insensible to your surroundings as a statue.

[2] The nine Muses were the daughters of Jupiter and Mnemosyne. They were: Calliope, Muse of epic poetry; Clio, Muse of history; Erato, Muse of love ditties; Euterpe, Muse of lyric poetry; Melpomene, Muse of tragedy; Polyhymnia, Muse of sacred poetry; Terpsichore, Muse of choral song and dance; Thalia, Muse of comedy; and Urania, Muse of astronomy.

[3] Always; forever.

[4] See Ezekiel x. 1, 2, and 6. Ezekiel describes a vision of a sapphire throne, the wheels of which were four cherubs, each wheel or cherub being full of eyes all over, while in the midst of them and underneath the throne was a burning fire. Milton brings into his company one of these cherubs, whom he names Contemplation.

[5] Hush, or whisper.

[6] "'Less Philomel," i.e., unless the nightingale.

[7] A name for the goddess of the moon. Cynthia's chariot was drawn by

Gently o'er the accustomed oak.[1]
Sweet bird, that shunn'st the noise of folly,
Most musical, most melancholy!
Thee, chauntress,[2] oft the woods among
I woo, to hear thy evensong;
And, missing thee, I walk unseen
On the dry smooth-shaven green,
To behold the wandering moon,
Riding near her highest noon,
Like one that had been led astray
Through the heaven's wide pathless way,
And oft, as if her head she bowed,
Stooping through a fleecy cloud.
Oft, on a plat of rising ground,
I hear the far-off curfew[3] sound,
Over some wide-watered shore,
Swinging slow with sullen roar;
Or, if the air will not permit,
Some still removèd place will fit,
Where glowing embers through the room
Teach light to counterfeit a gloom,
Far from all resort of mirth,
Save the cricket on the hearth,
Or the bellman's[4] drowsy charm

horses and not by dragons, as here represented. It was Ceres, the goddess of plenty, who had a "dragon yoke." Shakespeare several times alludes to the dragon team of night.

[1] "Accustomed oak," i.e., the oak where the nightingale was accustomed to sing and the poet was wont to listen to her.

[2] Songstress.

[3] From French, *couvre-feu* ("cover fire"); the bell which was rung in the evening as a signal that all fires were to be covered and all lights extinguished. The custom, which was instituted as a law by William the Conqueror, was still quite generally observed in Milton's time.

[4] The watchman who patrolled the streets and called out the hour of night. Sometimes he repeated scraps of pious poetry in order to charm away danger.

To bless the doors from nightly harm.)
Or let my lamp, at midnight hour,
Be seen in some high lonely tower,
Where I may oft outwatch the Bear,[1]
With thrice-great Hermes,[2] or unsphere
The spirit of Plato, to unfold
What worlds or what vast regions hold
The immortal mind that hath forsook
Her mansion in this fleshly nook;[3]
And of those demons that are found
In fire, air, flood, or underground,
Whose power hath a true consent[4]
With planet or with element.
Sometime let gorgeous Tragedy
In sceptered pall[5] come sweeping by,
Presenting Thebes,[6] or Pelops' line,
Or the tale of Troy divine,
Or what (though rare) of later age
Ennobled hath the buskined[7] stage.
But, O sad Virgin! that thy power

[1] The constellation of the Great Bear, which in these latitudes never sets. To "outwatch the Bear" would be to remain awake until daybreak.

[2] Hermes Trismegistus, an ancient Egyptian philosopher, the supposed author of certain once-famous works on philosophy.

[3] "Unsphere the spirit of Plato," etc., i.e., study Plato's philosophy of the immortality of the soul, and of the relation of the spirits ("demons") to the four elements, earth, air, fire, and water, over which they presided. The literal meaning of the phrase is "bring back the disembodied spirit of Plato from the sphere which he now inhabits."

[4] Sympathy.

[5] "Sceptered pall," i.e., royal robes.

[6] The three most popular subjects of Greek tragedy were those relating to the city of Thebes, to the descendants of Pelops (an early king of Greece), and to the memorable war with Troy.

[7] The buskin was the high-heeled boot worn by the actors of tragedy in the theaters of ancient Greece. It is therefore sometimes used as a symbol of the tragic drama. See note on "sock," L'Allegro, line 132.

Might raise Musæus[1] from his bower;
Or bid the soul of Orpheus sing
Such notes as, warbled to the string,
Drew iron tears down Pluto's cheek,
And made Hell grant what love did seek;[2]
Or call up him that left half told
The story of Cambuscan bold,
Of Camball, and of Algarsife,
And who had Canacè to wife,
That owned the virtuous ring and glass;
And of the wondrous horse of brass
On which the Tartar king did ride;[3]
And if aught else great bards beside
In sage and solemn tunes have sung,
Of turneys, and of trophies hung,
Of forests, and enchantments drear,
Where more is meant than meets the ear.
Thus, Night, oft see me in thy pale career,
Till civil-suited[5] Morn appear,
Not tricked and frounced, as she was wont
With the Attic boy[6] to hunt,
But kerchieft[7] in a comely cloud,

[1] An ancient Greek minstrel, or poet.

[2] See note on L'Allegro, line 145.

[3] "Or call up him," etc. An allusion to the poet Chaucer (1340–1400) and the poem The Squiers Tale, which he left unfinished. In this tale Cambuscan is a king of Tartary; Camball and Algarsife are his sons; and Canacè is his daughter. The horse of brass is a present from a neighboring king, as are also Canacè's ring and glass. The word "virtuous" here means "having magic power."

[4] "And if aught else," etc. A reference probably to the poets Ariosto, Tasso, and Spenser, and the romantic character and underlying moral purpose of their works.

[5] Contrast this description of Morning with that in L'Allegro.

[6] Cephalus, an Athenian youth, beloved by Aurora.

[7] Having the head covered, as with a kerchief.

While rocking winds are piping loud,
Or ushered with a shower still,
When the gust hath blown his[1] fill,
Ending on the rustling leaves,
With minute drops[2] from off the eaves.
And, when the sun begins to fling
His flaring beams, me, Goddess, bring
To archèd walks of twilight groves,
And shadows brown, that Sylvan[3] loves,
Of pine, or monumental oak,
Where the rude ax with heavèd stroke
Was never heard the nymphs to daunt,
Or fright them from their hallowed haunt.
There, in close covert, by some brook,
Where no profaner eye may look,
Hide me from day's garish eye,[4]
While the bee with honeyed thigh,
That at her flowery work doth sing,
And the waters murmuring,
With such consort[5] as they keep,
Entice the dewy-feathered Sleep.
And let some strange mysterious dream
Wave at his wings, in airy stream
Of lively portraiture displayed,
Softly on my eyelids laid;
And, as I wake, sweet music breathe
Above, about, or underneath,
Sent by some Spirit to mortals good,
Or the unseen Genius of the wood.

1 Its.

2 "Minute drops," i.e., drops falling slowly and at regular intervals as the shower comes to an end. Compare with "minute gun."

3 Sylvanus, the god of the woods.

4 "Day's garish eye," i.e., the dazzling sun.

5 Concert; harmony.

But let my due feet[1] never fail
To walk the studious cloister's pale,[2]
And love the high embowèd[3] roof,
With antique pillars massy proof,[4]
And storied windows[5] richly dight,
Casting a dim religious light.
There let the pealing organ blow,
To the full-voiced quire[6] below,
In service high and anthems clear,
As may with sweetness, through mine ear,
Dissolve me into ecstasies,
And bring all heaven before mine eyes.
And may at last my weary age
Find out the peaceful hermitage,
The hairy gown and mossy cell,
Where I may sit and rightly spell
Of every star that heaven doth shew,
And every herb that sips the dew,[7]
Till old experience do attain
To something like prophetic strain.[8]
These pleasures, Melancholy, give;
And I with thee will choose to live.

[1] "Due feet," i.e., feet that are due at a certain place at a certain time.

[2] "To walk," etc., i.e., to resort to the precincts or inclosure of some building devoted to study or religious meditation. The word "pale" means here "inclosure" or "boundary."

[3] Arched.

[4] Massive enough to be proof against the great weight which they are intended to support.

[5] "Storied windows," i.e., windows of stained glass with Scripture stories represented on them.

[6] Old spelling of choir.

[7] "Rightly spell," etc., i.e., study aright the phenomena of nature

[8] Utterance.

here-

COMUS: A MASQUE.

THE PERSONS.

The ATTENDANT SPIRIT, *afterwards in the habit of* THYRSIS.
COMUS, *with his Crew.*
The LADY.
FIRST BROTHER.
SECOND BROTHER.
SABRINA, *the Nymph.*

The first Scene discovers a Wild Wood.

The ATTENDANT SPIRIT *descends or enters.*

BEFORE the starry threshold of Jove's court
My mansion is, where those immortal shapes
Of bright aërial spirits live insphered [1]
In regions mild of calm and serene air,
Above the smoke and stir of this dim spot
Which men call Earth, and, with low-thoughted care,
Confined and pestered [2] in this pinfold [3] here,
Strive to keep up a frail and feverish being,
Unmindful of the crown that Virtue gives,
After this mortal change, to her true servants
Amongst the enthroned gods on sainted seats.
Yet some there be that by due steps aspire

[1] In the sphere assigned to them. Compare with Il Penseroso, line 88.

[2] Encumbered. "Pester" originally meant "a clog for horses in a pasture," hence, in its verbal signification, "to impede."

[3] A pound, pen, fold, or inclosure for confining stray cattle.

To lay their just hands on that golden key[1]
That opes the palace of eternity.
To such my errand is; and, but for such,
I would not soil these pure ambrosial weeds[2]
With the rank vapors of this sin-worn mold.[3]
But to my task. Neptune[4] besides the sway
Of every salt flood and each ebbing stream,
Took in by lot, 'twixt high and nether Jove,[5]
Imperial rule of all the seagirt isles
That, like to rich and various gems, inlay
The unadornèd bosom of the deep;
Which he, to grace his tributary gods,
By course commits to several[6] government,
And gives them leave to wear their sapphire crowns,
And wield their little tridents. But this Isle,[7]
The greatest and the best of all the main,
He quarters to his blue-haired deities;[8]

1 "Yet some," etc. St. Peter is represented as carrying the golden key with which to unlock the gates of heaven (see Lycidas, line 110). Milton here means that there are some who by their virtuous lives strive to merit admittance into heaven.

2 "Ambrosial weeds," i.e., immortal garments. Ambrosia was the food of the gods. For "weeds," see note on L'Allegro, line 120.

3 World.

4 The god of the sea and of all waters. His scepter was a three-pronged fork, or trident.

5 "Took in by lot," etc. The sons of Saturn, after the dethronement of their father, divided the government of the world by lot among themselves. Jupiter (high Jove) obtained the heavens and the mainland; Neptune, the sea and its islands; and Pluto (nether Jove), the infernal regions.

6 Separate.

7 Great Britain.

8 "Quarters to," etc., i.e., assigns to the deities of the sea. Neptune and his subordinates are referred to in classical poetry as "green-haired." Possibly Milton adopted "blue-haired" as more fitly symbolizing the sea waves; perhaps, also, he had in mind the blue-stained Britons who fought with Cæsar.

And all this tract[1] that fronts the falling sun
A noble Peer[2] of mickle[3] trust and power
Has in his charge, with tempered awe to guide
An old and haughty nation,[4] proud in arms:
Where his fair offspring,[5] nursed in princely lore,
Are coming to attend their father's state,
And new-intrusted scepter. But their way
Lies through the perplexed paths of this drear wood,[6]
The nodding horror of whose shady brows
Threats the forlorn and wandering passenger;
And here their tender age might suffer peril,
But that, by quick command from sovran Jove,
I was dispatched for their defense and guard:
And listen why; for I will tell you now
What never yet was heard in tale or song,
From old or modern bard, in hall or bower.
Bacchus,[7] that first from out the purple grape
Crushed the sweet poison of misusèd wine,
After the Tuscan mariners transformed,
Coasting the Tyrrhene[8] shore, as the winds listed,
On Circe's island[9] fell. (Who knows not Circe,
The daughter of the Sun, whose charmèd cup

1 Wales. 2 The Earl of Bridgewater (see Introduction, p. 7).
3 Great; much. 4 The Welsh.

5 The three children of the Earl of Bridgewater, who were now coming to Ludlow Castle on the occasion of their father's induction into office.

6 This is probably an allusion to the densely wooded region of Shropshire in the neighborhood of Ludlow Castle.

7 The god of wine and revelry.

8 Italian. The story is that on one occasion Tuscan pirates attempted to carry Bacchus to Italy to sell him as a slave. Suddenly the chains dropped from his limbs and he assumed the form of a lion. The ship stood still while vines grew up and entwined themselves round the mast and sails; and the pirates, in terror, leaped into the sea, where they were transformed into dolphins.

9 Ææa, near the shore of Tuscany.

Whoever tasted lost his upright shape,
And downward fell into a groveling swine?)
This Nymph, that gazed upon his clustering locks,
With ivy berries wreathed, and his blithe youth,
Had by him, ere he parted thence, a son
Much like his father, but his mother more,
Whom therefore she brought up, and Comus[1] named:
Who, ripe and frolic of his full-grown age,
Roving the Celtic and Iberian fields,[2]
At last betakes him to this ominous wood,
And, in thick shelter of black shades embowered,
Excels his mother at her mighty art;
Offering to every weary traveler
His orient liquor in a crystal glass,
To quench the drouth of Phœbus;[3] which as they taste
(For most do taste through fond intemperate thirst),
Soon as the potion works, their human count'nance,
The express resemblance of the gods is changed
Into some brutish form of wolf or bear,
Or ounce or tiger, hog, or bearded goat,
All other parts remaining as they were.
And they, so perfect is their misery,
Not once perceive their foul disfigurement,
But boast themselves more comely than before,
And all their friends and native home forget,
To roll with pleasure in a sensual sty.
Therefore, when any favored of high Jove
Chances to pass through this adventurous glade,
Swift as the sparkle of a glancing star
I shoot from heaven, to give him safe convoy,

1 This genealogy of Comus is purely the invention of Milton's fancy, and has no warrant in ancient mythology.

2 "Celtic," etc., i.e., France and Spain.

3 "Drouth," etc., i.e., the thirst caused by the sun's heat. Phœbus was the sun god, or personification of the sun.

As now I do. But first I must put off
These my sky robes, spun out of Iris'[1] woof,
And take the weeds and likeness of a swain
That to the service of this house belongs;
Who, with his soft pipe and smooth-dittied song,
Well knows[2] to still the wild winds when they roar,
And hush the waving woods; nor of less faith,
And in this office of his mountain watch
Likeliest, and nearest to the present aid
Of this occasion. But I hear the tread
Of hateful steps; I must be viewless now.

COMUS *enters, with a charming-rod in one hand, his glass in the other; with him a rout of monsters, headed like sundry sorts of wild beasts, but otherwise like men and women, their apparel glistering.*[3] *They come in making a riotous and unruly noise, with torches in their hands.*

Comus. The star[4] that bids the shepherd fold[5]
Now the top of heaven doth hold;
And the gilded car of day
His glowing axle doth allay
In the steep Atlantic stream;[6]
And the slope sun his upward beam
Shoots against the dusky pole,
Pacing towards the other goal
Of his chamber in the east.[7]
Meanwhile, welcome joy and feast,

[1] The personification of the rainbow. It may be inferred that the Attendant Spirit's sky robes were of the colors of the rainbow.

[2] Supply "how." [3] Glittering.

[4] The evening star, Hesperus or Venus.

[5] Drive his sheep into the fold.

[6] "In the steep," etc., i.e., in the sloping Atlantic flood, where it curves below the western horizon.

[7] "Pacing towards," etc., i.e., returning towards his rising place in the east.

Midnight shout and revelry,
Tipsy dance and jollity.
Braid your locks with rosy twine,[1]
Dropping odors, dropping wine.
Rigor now is gone to bed;
And Advice with scrupulous head,
Strict Age, and sour Severity,
With their grave saws,[2] in slumber lie.
We, that are of purer fire,
Imitate the starry quire,[3]
Who, in their nightly watchful spheres,
Lead in swift round the months and years.
The sounds and seas, with all their finny drove,
Now to the moon in wavering morrice[4] move;
And on the tawny sands and shelves
Trip the pert fairies and the dapper elves.
By dimpled brook and fountain brim,
The wood nymphs, decked with daisies trim,
Their merry wakes[5] and pastimes keep:
What hath night to do with sleep?
Night hath better sweets to prove;
Venus[6] now wakes, and wakens Love.
Come, let us our rites begin;
'Tis only daylight that makes sin,
Which these dun shades will ne'er report.—
Hail, goddess of nocturnal sport,

[1] Roses twined together. [2] Wise sayings; sober rules.

[3] Choir. Used here, perhaps, with its original signification, a band of choral dancers. The poet has also in mind the ancient notion of the music made by the revolution of the spheres.

[4] The morris, or Moorish dance, was introduced into England in the reign of Edward III. It was a prominent feature of the May Day and other out-door festivities.

[5] Nocturnal amusements. Originally a "wake" was the watch or sitting up till late before one of the church holidays.

[6] Goddess of love and beauty.

Dark-veiled Cotytto,[1] to whom the secret flame
Of midnight torches burns! mysterious dame,
That ne'er art called but when the dragon womb
Of Stygian darkness[2] spets[3] her thickest gloom,
And makes one blot of all the air!
Stay thy cloudy ebon chair,
Wherein thou ridest with Hecat',[4] and befriend
Us thy vowed priests, till utmost end
Of all thy dues be done, and none left out;
Ere the blabbing eastern scout,
The nice Morn on the Indian steep,
From her cabined loophole peep,[5]
And to the telltale Sun descry
Our concealed solemnity.
Come, knit hands, and beat the ground
In a light fantastic round.[6] [*The Measure.*
Break off, break off![7] I feel the different pace
Of some chaste footing near about this ground.
Run to your shrouds[8] within these brakes and trees;
Our number may affright. Some virgin sure
(For so I can distinguish by mine art)
Benighted in these woods! Now to my charms,
And to my wily trains:[9] I shall ere long
Be well stocked with as fair a herd as grazed
About my mother Circe. Thus I hurl
My dazzling spells into the spongy[10] air,

[1] A Thracian goddess whose licentious festivals were celebrated at night.

[2] "Stygian darkness," i.e., the darkness of the infernal regions. See note on L'Allegro, line 3.

[3] Spits; ejects.

[4] Hecate, the goddess of sorcery, supposed to preside over all nocturnal horrors.

[5] "Nice Morn," etc., i.e., the fastidious dawn peeps from among the clouds on the eastern (Indian) horizon.

[6] Dance; measure. [7] "Break off," i.e., cease dancing.

[8] Hiding places. [9] Allurements. [10] Absorbent.

Of power to cheat the eye with blear[1] illusion,
And give it false presentments, lest the place
And my quaint habits breed astonishment,
And put the damsel to suspicious flight;
Which must not be, for that's against my course.
I, under fair pretense of friendly ends,
And well-placed words of glozing[2] courtesy,
Baited with reasons not unplausible,
Wind me into the easy-hearted man,
And hug him into snares. When once her eye
Hath met the virtue[3] of this magic dust,
I shall appear some harmless villager,
Whom thrift keeps up about his country gear.[4]—
But here she comes; I fairly step aside,
And hearken, if I may, her business here.

The LADY *enters.*

Lady. This way the noise was, if mine ear be true,
My best guide now. Methought it was the sound
Of riot and ill-managed merriment,
Such as the jocund flute or gamesome pipe
Stirs up among the loose unlettered hinds,[5]
When, for their teeming flocks and granges full,
In wanton dance they praise the bounteous Pan,[6]
And thank the gods amiss.[7] I should be loath
To meet the rudeness and swilled insolence
Of such late wassailers; yet, oh! where else
Shall I inform my unacquainted feet
In the blind mazes of this tangled wood?
My brothers, when they saw me wearied out

[1] Blurred; deceitful. [2] Flattering. [3] Peculiar power.
[4] Business; duties. [5] Peasants.
[6] God of shepherds and pastoral life.
[7] By acts altogether displeasing to them.

With this long way, resolving here to lodge
Under the spreading favor of these pines,
Stepped, as they said, to the next thicket side
To bring me berries, or such cooling fruit
As the kind hospitable woods provide.
They left me then when the gray-hooded Even,
Like a sad votarist in palmer's weed,[1]
Rose from the hindmost wheels of Phœbus' wain.[2]
But where they are, and why they came not back,
Is now the labor of my thoughts. 'Tis likeliest
They had engaged their wandering steps too far;[3]
And envious darkness, ere they could return,
Had stole them from me. Else, O thievish Night,
Why shouldst thou, but for some felonious end,
In thy dark lantern thus close up the stars
That Nature hung in heaven, and filled their lamps
With everlasting oil, to give due light
To the misled and lonely traveler?
This is the place, as well as I may guess,
Whence even now the tumult of loud mirth
Was rife, and perfect in my listening ear;
Yet naught but single[4] darkness do I find.
What might this be? A thousand fantasies
Begin to throng into my memory,
Of calling shapes, and beckoning shadows dire,
And airy tongues that syllable men's names
On sands and shores and desert wildernesses.
These thoughts may startle well, but not astound
The virtuous mind, that ever walks attended
By a strong siding[5] champion, Conscience.—

1 "Votarist in palmer's weed," i.e., a pilgrim clad in the garb of one returning from the Holy Sepulcher.

2 "Phœbus' wain," i.e., the sun car. See note on line 66

3 "Engaged," etc., i.e., had undertaken to go too far

4 Only. 5 Supporting.

O, welcome, pure-eyed Faith, white-handed Hope,
Thou hovering angel girt with golden wings,
And thou unblemished form of Chastity!
I see ye visibly, and now believe
That He, the Supreme Good, to whom all things ill
Are but as slavish officers of vengeance,
Would send a glistering guardian, if need were,
To keep my life and honor unassailed.—
Was I deceived, or did a sable cloud
Turn forth her silver lining on the night?
I did not err: there does a sable cloud
Turn forth her silver lining on the night,
And casts a gleam over this tufted grove.
I cannot hallo to my brothers, but
Such noise as I can make to be heard farthest
I'll venture; for my new-enlivened [1] spirits
Prompt me, and they perhaps are not far off.

SONG.

Sweet Echo,[2] *sweetest nymph, that liv'st unseen*
Within thy airy shell
By slow Meander's[3] *margent green,*
And in the violet-embroidered vale
Where the lovelorn nightingale
Nightly to thee her sad song mourneth well:
Canst thou not tell me of a gentle pair
That likest thy Narcissus are?
O, if thou have
Hid them in some flowery cave,
Tell me but where,

[1] Encouraged.

[2] The nymph Echo loved Narcissus; as her love was not returned, she pined away until nothing remained but her beautiful voice.

[3] A winding river in Asia Minor.

Sweet Queen of Parley, Daughter of the Sphere![1]
So may'st thou be translated to the skies,
And give resounding grace to all heaven's harmonies!

Comus. Can any mortal mixture of earth's mold
Breathe such divine enchanting ravishment?
Sure something holy lodges in that breast,
And with these raptures moves the vocal air
To testify his[2] hidden residence.
How sweetly did they float upon the wings
Of silence, through the empty-vaulted night,
At every fall smoothing the raven down[3]
Of darkness till it smiled! I have oft heard
My mother Circe, with the Sirens[4] three,
Amidst the flowery-kirtled Naiades,[5]
Culling their potent herbs and baleful drugs,
Who, as they sung, would take the prisoned soul,
And lap it in Elysium:[6] Scylla wept,
And chid her barking waves into attention,
And fell Charybdis[7] murmured soft applause.
Yet they in pleasing slumber lulled the sense,
And in sweet madness robbed it of itself;

1 "Queen," etc., i.e., Queen of Speech, Daughter of the Air.

2 Its. The antecedent of the word is "something holy," line 246. The neuter possessive pronoun *its* is of comparatively recent origin. Spenser did not use it at all, nor is it found anywhere in the authorized version of the English Bible. It occurs but ten times in Shakespeare's works; and Milton seems to prefer the old form, *his*.

3 "The raven down," i.e., the black, feathery softness.

4 Sea nymphs, who by their songs lured people to death. In ancient mythology they had no connection with Circe.

5 Nymphs of the fountains and streams.

6 "Lap it," etc., i.e., enwrap it in heavenly bliss. See note on "Elysian," L'Allegro, line 147.

7 Scylla and Charybdis were rocks upon opposite sides of the Sicilian Straits. The myth states that Circe transformed the nymph Scylla, who lived under the rock of that name, into a barking dog.

But such a sacred and home-felt delight,
Such sober certainty of waking bliss,
I never heard till now. I'll speak to her,
And she shall be my queen. — Hail, foreign wonder!
Whom certain these rough shades did never breed,
Unless the goddess that in rural shrine
Dwell'st here with Pan or Sylvan,[1] by blest song
Forbidding every bleak unkindly fog
To touch the prosperous growth of this tall wood.
Lady. Nay, gentle shepherd, ill is lost that praise
That is addressed to unattending ears.
Not any boast of skill, but extreme shift[2]
How to regain my severed company,
Compelled me to awake the courteous Echo
To give me answer from her mossy couch.
Comus. What chance, good Lady, hath bereft you thus?
Lady. Dim darkness and this leafy labyrinth.
Comus. Could that divide you from near-ushering guides?
Lady. They left me weary on a grassy turf.
Comus. By falsehood, or discourtesy, or why?
Lady. To seek i' the valley some cool friendly spring.
Comus. And left your fair side all unguarded, Lady?
Lady. They were but twain, and purposed quick return.
Comus. Perhaps forestalling night prevented them.
Lady. How easy my misfortune is to hit![3]
Comus. Imports their loss, beside the present need?
Lady. No less than if I should my brothers lose.
Comus. Were they of manly prime, or youthful bloom?
Lady. As smooth as Hebe's[4] their unrazored lips.

[1] See note on Il Penseroso, line 134.
[2] "Extreme shift," i.e., the last expedient.
[3] Guess. [4] See note on L'Allegro, line 29.

Comus. Two such I saw, what time the labored ox
In his loose traces from the furrow came,
And the swinked hedger[1] at his supper sat.
I saw them under a green mantling vine,
That crawls along the side of yon small hill,
Plucking ripe clusters from the tender shoots;
Their port[2] was more than human, as they stood.
I took it for a fairy vision
Of some gay creatures of the element,[3]
That in the colors of the rainbow live,
And play i' the plighted[4] clouds. I was awe-strook,[5]
And, as I passed, I worshiped. If those you seek,
It were a journey like the path to heaven
To help you find them.

Lady. Gentle villager,
What readiest way would bring me to that place?

Comus. Due west it rises from this shrubby point.

Lady. To find out that, good shepherd, I suppose,
In such a scant allowance of starlight,
Would overtask the best land pilot's art,
Without the sure guess of well-practiced feet.

Comus. I know each lane, and every alley green,
Dingle, or bushy dell, of this wild wood,
And every bosky bourn[6] from side to side,
My daily walks and ancient neighborhood;
And, if your stray attendance[7] be yet lodged,
Or shroud[8] within these limits, I shall know
Ere morrow wake, or the low-roosted lark
From her thatched pallet[9] rouse. If otherwise,

[1] "Swinked hedger," i.e., tired laborer.

[2] Bearing; manner. The poet here pays a compliment to the two sons of the Earl of Bridgewater, who were about to come on the stage.

[3] Air. [4] Plaited; interwoven. [5] Awe-struck.

[6] Shrubby-banked watercourse. [7] Attendants.

[8] Are hidden. See the use of the same word as a noun, line 147.

[9] The lark makes her nest on the ground.

I can conduct you, Lady, to a low
But loyal cottage, where you may be safe
Till further quest.

Lady. Shepherd, I take thy word,
And trust thy honest-offered courtesy,
Which oft is sooner found in lowly sheds,
With smoky rafters, than in tapestry halls
And courts of princes, where it first was named,[1]
And yet is most pretended. In a place
Less warranted than this, or less secure,
I cannot be, that I should fear to change it.—
Eye me, blest Providence, and square my trial
To my proportioned strength![2]—Shepherd, lead on.

[*Exeunt*

Enter the Two Brothers.

Elder Brother. Unmuffle, ye faint stars; and thou, fair moon,
That wont'st to love the traveler's benison,
Stoop thy pale visage through an amber cloud,
And disinherit Chaos that reigns here
In double night of darkness and of shades;
Or, if your influence be quite dammed up
With black usurping mists, some gentle taper,
Though a rush candle from the wicker hole[3]
Of some clay habitation, visit us
With thy long leveled rule of streaming light,
And thou shalt be our star of Arcady,[4]
Or Tyrian Cynosure.

[1] Courtesy meant originally the manners of the court.

[2] "Square my trial," etc., i.e., adapt my trial to the proportions of my strength.

[3] Wicker-crossed opening, or window.

[4] "Star of Arcady," i.e., any star in the constellation of the Great Bear. It was so called from Calisto, daughter of a king of Arcadia, who was changed

Second Brother. Or, if our eyes
Be barred that happiness, might we but hear
The folded flocks, penned in their wattled cotes,[1]
Or sound of pastoral reed with oaten stops,[2]
Or whistle from the lodge, or village cock
Count the night watches to his feathery dames,
'Twould be some solace yet, some little cheering,
In this close dungeon of innumerous[3] boughs.
But, oh, that hapless virgin, our lost sister!
Where may she wander now, whither betake her
From the chill dew, amongst rude burs and thistles?
Perhaps some cold bank is her bolster now,
Or 'gainst the rugged bark of some broad elm
Leans her unpillowed head, fraught with sad fears.
What if in wild amazement and affright,
Or, while we speak, within the direful grasp
Of savage hunger, or of savage heat!

Elder Brother. Peace, brother: be not over-exquisite[4]
To cast the fashion[5] of uncertain evils;
For, grant they be so, while they rest unknown,
What need a man forestall his date of grief,
And run to meet what he would most avoid?
Or, if they be but false alarms of fear,
How bitter is such self-delusion!
I do not think my sister so to seek,[6]
Or so unprincipled in virtue's book,
And the sweet peace that goodness bosoms ever,

into that constellation. The Greek sailors steered their vessels by a star of Arcady; the Phœnicians, by the Cynosura. See note on L'Allegro, line 80.

[1] "Wattled cotes," i.e., cots or sheltering places made of wattled withes, or twigs.

[2] The stops are the holes in an oaten pipe, or reed, used as a musical instrument.

[3] Innumerable. [4] Overanxious, or inquisitive.

[5] "To cast the fashion," i.e., to predict the nature.

[6] "So to seek," i.e., so ignorant what to do, at a loss.

As that the single want of light and noise
(Not being in danger, as I trust she is not)
Could stir the constant mood of her calm thoughts,
And put them into misbecoming plight.
Virtue could see to do what Virtue would
By her own radiant light, though sun and moon
Were in the flat sea sunk.[1] And Wisdom's self
Oft seeks[2] to sweet retired solitude,
Where, with her best nurse, Contemplation,
She plumes her feathers, and lets grow her wings,
That, in the various bustle of resort,
Were all to-ruffled, and sometimes impaired.
He that has light within his own clear breast,
May sit i' the center,[3] and enjoy bright day:
But he that hides a dark soul and foul thoughts
Benighted walks under the midday sun;
Himself is his own dungeon.

Second Brother. 'Tis most true
That musing Meditation most affects
The pensive secrecy of desert cell,
Far from the cheerful haunt of men and herds,
And sits as safe as in a senate house;
For who would rob a hermit of his weeds,
His few books, or his beads, or maple dish,
Or do his gray hairs any violence?
But Beauty, like the fair Hesperian tree[4]
Laden with blooming gold, had need the guard
Of dragon watch with unenchanted eye
To save her blossoms, and defend her fruit,
From the rash hand of bold Incontinence.

[1] "Virtue could," etc. Spenser says: "Virtue gives herselfe light, through darknesse for to wade."—Faerie Queene, Book I., Canto I., Stanza 12.

[2] Resorts. [3] In the center of the earth, or utter darkness.

[4] The tree which was under the guardianship of the Hesperides, and which bore golden apples. It was watched by a dragon.

You may as well spread out the unsunned heaps
Of miser's treasure by an outlaw's den,
And tell me it is safe, as bid me hope
Danger will wink on Opportunity,
And let a single helpless maiden pass
Uninjured in this wild surrounding waste.
Of night or loneliness it recks me not;[1]
I fear the dread events that dog[2] them both,
Lest some ill-greeting touch attempt the person
Of our unownèd[3] sister.

Elder Brother. I do not, brother,
Infer as if I thought my sister's state
Secure without all doubt or controversy;
Yet, where an equal poise of hope and fear
Does arbitrate the event, my nature is
That I incline to hope rather than fear,
And gladly banish squint[4] suspicion.
My sister is not so defenseless left
As you imagine; she has a hidden strength,
Which you remember not.

Second Brother. What hidden strength,
Unless the strength of Heaven, if you mean that?

Elder Brother. I mean that too, but yet a hidden strength,
Which, if Heaven gave it, may be termed her own.
'Tis chastity, my brother, chastity:
She that has that is clad in complete steel,
And, like a quivered nymph[5] with arrows keen,
May trace huge forests, and unharbored heaths,
Infamous hills, and sandy perilous wilds;
Where, through the sacred rays of chastity,

[1] "It recks," etc., i.e., I take no account.
[2] Pursue. [3] Unprotected. [4] Looking askance or sideways.
[5] A reference to one of the nymphs or companions of the chaste goddess Diana. See note on line 441.

No savage fierce, bandit, or mountaineer,
Will dare to soil her virgin purity.
Yea, there where very desolation dwells,
By grots and caverns shagged with horrid shades,
She may pass on with unblenched [1] majesty,
Be it not done in pride, or in presumption.
Some say no evil thing that walks by night,
In fog or fire, by lake or moorish fen,
Blue meager hag, or stubborn unlaid ghost
That breaks his magic chains at curfew [2] time,
No goblin or swart faery [3] of the mine,
Hath hurtful power o'er true virginity.
Do ye believe me yet, or shall I call
Antiquity from the old schools of Greece
To testify the arms of chastity?
Hence had the huntress Dian [4] her dread bow,
Fair silver-shafted queen, forever chaste,
Wherewith she tamed the brinded [5] lioness
And spotted mountain pard, but set at naught
The frivolous bolt of Cupid;[6] gods and men
Feared her stern frown, and she was queen o' the woods.
What was that snaky-headed Gorgon shield [7]

1 Fearless.

2 See note on Il Penseroso, line 74. There was a popular superstition that certain evil spirits were always abroad from curfew time till the crowing of the cock at dawn.

3 "Swart faery," i.e., black fairy, or elf, such as, according to ancient superstition, dwelt in mines; cf. the gnomes, or dwarfs.

4 "Diana (Cynthia) was not only goddess of the moon, but also of the chase. In works of art she is represented as a beautiful maiden, clad in a short hunting dress, and with a crescent on her well-poised head." (GUERBER.)

5 Brindled; streaked.

6 Cupid, son of Venus and Mars, was god of love. The bolts or darts which he shot from his bow had the power of exciting love in the heart of any one whom they pierced.

7 The three Gorgons were hideous monsters whose faces were so fearful that whoever looked on them became "congealed stone." One of these

That wise Minerva wore, unconquered virgin,
Wherewith she freezed her foes to congealed stone,
But rigid looks of chaste austerity,
And noble grace that dashed brute violence
With sudden adoration and blank awe?
So dear to Heaven is saintly chastity
That, when a soul is found sincerely so,
A thousand liveried angels lackey her,
Driving far off each thing of sin and guilt,
And in clear dream and solemn vision
Tell her of things that no gross ear can hear;
Till oft[1] converse with heavenly habitants
Begin to cast a beam on the outward shape,
The unpolluted temple of the mind,
And turns it by degrees to the soul's essence,
Till all be made immortal. But, when lust,
By unchaste looks, loose gestures, and foul talk,
But most by lewd and lavish act of sin,
Lets in defilement to the inward parts,
The soul grows clotted by contagion,
Imbodies, and imbrutes,[2] till she quite lose
The divine property of her first being.
Such are those thick and gloomy shadows damp
Oft seen in charnel vaults and sepulchers,
Lingering and sitting by a new-made grave,
As loath to leave the body that it loved,
And linked itself by carnal sensualty
To a degenerate and degraded state.[3]

creatures, Medusa, was slain by Perseus, and her head was presented to Minerva, who placed it in her shield, where the face continued to retain its petrifying power.

1 Frequent.

2 "Imbodies, and imbrutes," i.e., becomes carnal and brutal.

3 Milton has here adapted a well-known passage from Plato's Phædo, in which Socrates is speaking of souls that have given themselves up to corporeal

Second Brother. How charming is divine philosophy!
Not harsh and crabbed, as dull fools suppose,
But musical as is Apollo's lute,[1]
And a perpetual feast of nectared sweets,
Where no crude surfeit[2] reigns.
Elder Brother. List! list! I hear
Some far-off hallo break the silent air.
Second Brother. Methought so too; what should it be?
Elder Brother. For certain,
Either some one, like us, night foundered here;
Or else some neighbor woodman; or, at worst,
Some roving robber calling to his fellows.
Second Brother. Heaven keep my sister! Again, again, and near!
Best draw, and stand upon our guard.
Elder Brother. I'll hallo.
If he be friendly, he comes well: if not,
Defense is a good cause, and Heaven be for us!

Enter the ATTENDANT SPIRIT, *habited like a shepherd.*

That hallo I should know. What are you? speak.
Come not too near; you fall on iron stakes[3] else.
Spirit. What voice is that? my young lord? speak again.
Second Brother. O brother, 'tis my father's shepherd, sure.
Elder Brother. Thyrsis! whose artful strains have oft delayed

pleasures. When the body dies, these souls, he says, being unfit to soar to heaven, are weighed down to earth, and wander as visible, shadowy phantoms amongst the tombs.

[1] Apollo was the god of song and music, and was said to have been the inventor of the lute.

[2] "Crude surfeit," i.e., unhealthful excess.

[3] "Fall on iron stakes," i.e., come in contact with our swords.

The huddling brook[1] to hear his madrigal,
And sweetened every musk rose of the dale.—
How camest thou here, good swain? Hath any ram
Slipped from the fold, or young kid lost his dam,
Or straggling wether the pent flock forsook?
How couldst thou find this dark sequestered nook?
Spirit. O my loved master's heir, and his next joy,
I came not here on such a trivial toy
As a strayed ewe, or to pursue the stealth
Of pilfering wolf; not all the fleecy wealth
That doth enrich these downs is worth a thought
To this my errand, and the care it brought.
But, oh! my virgin Lady, where is she?
How chance she is not in your company?
Elder Brother. To tell thee sadly, Shepherd, without blame
Or our neglect, we lost her as we came.
Spirit. Ay me unhappy! then my fears are true.
Elder Brother. What fears, good Thyrsis? Prithee[2] briefly show.
Spirit. I'll tell ye. 'Tis not vain or fabulous
(Though so esteemed by shallow ignorance)
What the sage poets, taught by the heavenly Muse,
Storied of old in high immortal verse
Of dire Chimeras[3] and enchanted isles,
And rifted rocks whose entrance leads to hell;
For such there be, but unbelief is blind.

[1] "Huddling brook." The waters are huddled together as they delay to listen to his music. The poet is here paying a compliment to Henry Lawes, who acted the part of the Attendant Spirit and had arranged the music for the masque.

[2] I pray thee.

[3] The chimera was a mythical monster having a lion's head, a goat's body, and a dragon's tail. Hence, a name applied to any incongruous fancy or creature of the imagination.

Within the navel[1] of this hideous wood,
Immured in cypress shades, a sorcerer dwells,
Of Bacchus and of Circe born, great Comus,
Deep skilled in all his mother's witcheries,
And here to every thirsty wanderer
By sly enticement gives his baneful cup,
With many murmurs[2] mixed, whose pleasing poison
The visage quite transforms of him that drinks,
And the inglorious likeness of a beast
Fixes instead, unmolding reason's mintage
Charactered in the face.[3] This have I learnt
Tending my flocks hard by i' the hilly crofts[4]
That brow this bottom glade; whence night by night
He and his monstrous rout are heard to howl
Like stabled wolves, or tigers at their prey,
Doing abhorrèd rites to Hecate
In their obscurèd haunts of inmost bowers.
Yet have they many baits and guileful spells
To inveigle and invite the unwary sense
Of them that pass unweeting[5] by the way.
This evening late, by then[6] the chewing flocks
Had ta'en their supper on the savory herb
Of knotgrass dew-besprent, and were in fold,
I sat me down to watch upon a bank
With ivy canopied, and interwove
With flaunting honeysuckle, and began,
Wrapt in a pleasing fit of melancholy,
To meditate[7] my rural minstrelsy,
Till fancy had her fill. But ere a close

1 Center. 2 Muttered incantations.
3 "Unmolding," etc., i.e., destroying the stamp of reason impressed in the human face.
4 Small, inclosed fields. 5 Unwitting; not knowing the dangers.
6 "By then," i.e., about the time when.
7 "To meditate," i.e., to practice; to devote some time to.

The wonted roar was up[1] amidst the woods,
And filled the air with barbarous dissonance;
At which I ceased, and listened them awhile,
Till an unusual stop of sudden silence
Gave respite to the drowsy frighted[2] steeds
That draw the litter of close-curtained Sleep.
At last a soft and solemn-breathing sound
Rose like a steam of rich distilled perfumes,
And stole upon the air, that even Silence
Was took ere she was ware, and wished she might
Deny her nature, and be never more,
Still to be so displaced. I was all ear,
And took in strains that might create a soul
Under the ribs of Death.[3] But, oh! ere long
Too well I did perceive it was the voice
Of my most honored Lady, your dear sister.
Amazed I stood, harrowed with grief and fear;
And "O poor hapless nightingale," thought I,
"How sweet thou sing'st, how near the deadly snare!"
Then down the lawns I ran with headlong haste,
Through paths and turnings often trod by day,
Till, guided by mine ear, I found the place
Where that damned wizard, hid in sly disguise
(For so by certain signs I knew), had met
Already, ere my best speed could prevent,
The aidless innocent lady, his wished prey;
Who gently asked if he had seen such two,
Supposing him some neighbor villager.

[1] Had begun.

[2] "Drowsy frighted," etc., i.e., the drowsy steeds of night that have been frighted by the barbarous dissonance of Comus and his crew.

[3] "Even Silence," etc., i.e., even Silence was so charmed by this music that she would willingly have ceased to exist if she could always be displaced by it. I could hear nothing else, for these strains were so ravishing that they might even have restored a soul within a lifeless skeleton.

Longer I durst not stay, but soon I guessed
Ye were the two she meant; with that I sprung
Into swift flight, till I had found you here;
But further know I not.
Second Brother. O night and shades,
How are ye joined with hell in triple knot
Against the unarmed weakness of one virgin,
Alone and helpless! Is this the confidence
You gave me, brother?
Elder Brother. Yes, and keep it still;
Lean on it safely; not a period[1]
Shall be unsaid for me. Against the threats
Of malice or of sorcery, or that power
Which erring men call Chance, this I hold firm:
Virtue may be assailed, but never hurt;
Surprised by unjust force, but not enthralled;
Yea, even that which Mischief meant most harm
Shall in the happy trial prove most glory.
But evil on itself shall back recoil,
And mix no more with goodness, when at last,
Gathered like scum, and settled to itself,
It shall be in eternal restless change
Self-fed and self-consumed. If this fail,
The pillared firmament is rottenness,
And earth's base built on stubble. But come, let's on!
Against the opposing will and arm of Heaven
May never this just sword be lifted up;
But, for that damned magician, let him be girt
With all the grisly legions that troop
Under the sooty flag of Acheron,[2]
Harpies[3] and Hydras,[4] or all the monstrous forms

[1] Sentence.

[2] Acheron was one of the rivers of the infernal regions; as here used, it means hell itself.

[3] Loathsome winged monsters. [4] Huge water snakes.

'Twixt Africa and Ind, I'll find him out,
And force him to return his purchase[1] back,
Or drag him by the curls to a foul death,
Cursed as his life.

Spirit. Alas! good venturous youth,
I love thy courage yet, and bold emprise;
But here thy sword can do thee little stead.
Far other arms and other weapons must
Be those that quell the might of hellish charms.
He with his bare wand can unthread thy joints,
And crumble all thy sinews.

Elder Brother. Why, prithee, Shepherd,
How durst thou then thyself approach so near
As to make this relation?

Spirit. Care and utmost shifts[2]
How to secure the Lady from surprisal
Brought to my mind a certain shepherd lad,
Of small regard to see to,[3] yet well skilled
In every virtuous[4] plant and healing herb
That spreads her verdant leaf to the morning ray.
He loved me well, and oft would beg me sing;
Which when I did, he on the tender grass
Would sit, and hearken even to ecstasy,
And in requital ope his leathern scrip,
And show me simples[5] of a thousand names,
Telling their strange and vigorous faculties.
Amongst the rest a small unsightly root,
But of divine effect, he culled me out.
The leaf was darkish, and had prickles on it,
But in another country, as he said,
Bore a bright golden flower, but not in this soil:
Unknown, and like esteemed, and the dull swain

[1] "His purchase," i.e., what he has stolen; his booty.
[2] See note on line 273.
[3] To look upon.
[4] Medicinal.
[5] Simple medicinal remedies.

Treads on it daily with his clouted shoon;[1]
And yet more medicinal is it than that Moly[2]
That Hermes once to wise Ulysses gave.
He called it Hæmony,[3] and gave it me,
And bade me keep it as of sovran use
'Gainst all enchantments, mildew blast, or damp,
Or ghastly Furies' apparition.
I pursed it up, but little reckoning made,
Till now that this extremity compelled.
But now I find it true; for by this means
I knew the foul enchanter, though disguised,
Entered the very lime twigs of his spells,[4]
And yet came off. If you have this about you
(As I will give you when we go) you may
Boldly assault the necromancer's hall;
Where if he be, with dauntless hardihood
And brandished blade rush on him; break his glass,
And shed the luscious liquor on the ground;
But seize his wand. Though he and his curst crew
Fierce sign of battle make, and menace high,
Or, like the sons of Vulcan,[5] vomit smoke,
Yet will they soon retire, if he but shrink.

Elder Brother. Thyrsis, lead on apace; I'll follow thee;
And some good angel bear a shield before us!

1 "Clouted shoon," i.e., patched or hobnailed shoes.

2 A fabulous herb having the power to protect against the charms of Circe. "It was black at the root, but the flower was like to milk. Moly the gods call it, but it is hard for mortal men to dig; howbeit, with the gods all things are possible." (Odyssey, 303–306.)

3 A name probably coined by Milton from Hæmonia (Thessaly), a land once famous for magic.

4 "Very lime twigs," etc., an allusion to the method of catching birds by means of twigs covered with a sticky substance.

5 Vulcan was the god of fire. The allusion is probably to Cacus, a son of Vulcan, who, according to Virgil, vomited huge volumes of smoke when pursued by Hercules.

The Scene changes to a stately palace, set out with all manner of deliciousness: soft music, tables spread with all dainties. COMUS *appears with his rabble, and the* LADY *set in an enchanted chair: to whom he offers his glass; which she puts by, and goes about to rise.*

Comus. Nay, Lady, sit. If I but wave this wand,
Your nerves are all chained up in alabaster,
And you a statue, or as Daphne [1] was,
Root bound, that fled Apollo.
Lady. Fool, do not boast.
Thou canst not touch the freedom of my mind
With all thy charms, although this corporal rind [2]
Thou hast immanacled, while Heaven sees good.
Comus. Why are you vexed, Lady? why do you frown?
Here dwell no frowns, nor anger; from these gates
Sorrow flies far. See, here be all the pleasures
That fancy can beget on youthful thoughts,
When the fresh blood grows lively, and returns
Brisk as the April buds in primrose season.
And first behold this cordial julep [3] here,
That flames and dances in his crystal bounds,
With spirit of balm and fragrant syrups mixed.
Not that nepenthes [4] which the wife of Thone
In Egypt gave to Jove-born Helena,
Is of such power to stir up joy as this,
To life so friendly, or so cool to thirst.
Why should you be so cruel to yourself,
And to those dainty limbs, which Nature lent
For gentle usage and soft delicacy?

[1] A maiden beloved by Apollo. Being pursued by him, and likely to be overtaken, she prayed for aid, and was transformed into a laurel tree.

[2] "Corporal rind," i.e., bodily protection; body.

[3] "Cordial julep," i.e., exhilarating drink. "Julep" is from two Persian words meaning "rose" and "water."

[4] A care-dispelling drug, thought to have been opium, that Helen (daughter of Jupiter by Leda) gave to her husband Menelaus. It was given her by Polydamna, wife of Thone.

But you invert the covenants of her trust,
And harshly deal, like an ill borrower,
With that which you received on other terms,
Scorning the unexempt condition
By which all mortal frailty must subsist,
Refreshment after toil, ease after pain,
That have been tired all day without repast,
And timely rest have wanted. But, fair virgin,
This will restore all soon.

Lady. 'Twill not, false traitor! 690
'Twill not restore the truth and honesty
That thou hast banished from thy tongue with lies.
Was this the cottage and the safe abode
Thou told'st me of? What grim aspects are these,
These ugly-headed monsters? Mercy guard me!
Hence with thy brewed enchantments, foul deceiver!
Hast thou betrayed my credulous innocence
With vizored [1] falsehood and base forgery?
And would'st thou seek again to trap me here
With liquorish [2] baits, fit to insnare a brute? 700
Were it a draft for Juno when she banquets,
I would not taste thy treasonous offer. None
But such as are good men can give good things;
And that which is not good is not delicious
To a well-governed and wise appetite.

Comus. O foolishness of men! that lend their ears
To those budge [3] doctors of the Stoic [4] fur,

[1] Masked.

[2] From a German word meaning to "lick the lips;" hence, dainty, delicious.

[3] A kind of fur, or lamb's wool, formerly used for trimming scholastic habits. The word is sometimes used in the sense of "big," and may also mean "surly."

[4] The Stoics were Greek philosophers who taught that men should repress all exhibition of passion and should submit to unavoidable necessity without complaining.

And fetch their precepts from the Cynic[1] tub,
Praising the lean and sallow Abstinence!
Wherefore did Nature pour her bounties forth
With such a full and unwithdrawing hand,
Covering the earth with odors, fruits, and flocks,
Thronging the seas with spawn innumerable,
But all to please and sate the curious taste?
And set to work millions of spinning worms,
That in their green shops weave the smooth-haired silk,
To deck her sons; and, that no corner might
Be vacant of her plenty, in her own loins
She hutched[2] the all-worshiped ore and precious gems,
To store her children with. If all the world
Should, in a pet of temperance, feed on pulse,
Drink the clear stream, and nothing wear but frieze,[3]
The All-giver would be unthanked, would be unpraised,
Not half his riches known, and yet despised;
And we should serve him as a grudging master,
As a penurious niggard of his wealth,
And live like Nature's bastards, not her sons,
Who would be quite surcharged with her own weight,
And strangled with her waste fertility:
The earth cumbered, and the winged air darked with plumes,
The herds would overmultitude their lords;
The sea o'erfraught[4] would swell, and the unsought diamonds
Would so emblaze the forehead of the deep,
And so bestud with stars, that they below
Would grow inured to light, and come at last
To gaze upon the sun with shameless brows.

[1] The Cynics were Greek philosophers noted for the austerity of their lives. Diogenes, the most distinguished member of the sect, lived in a tub.

[2] Laid up, as in a box.

[3] Coarse woolen cloth.

[4] Overloaded; overfilled.

List, Lady; be not coy, and be not cozened
With that same vaunted name, Virginity.
Beauty is Nature's coin; must not be hoarded,
But must be current; and the good thereof
Consists in mutual and partaken bliss,
Unsavory in the enjoyment of itself.
If you let slip time, like a neglected rose
It withers on the stalk with languished head.
Beauty is Nature's brag,[1] and must be shown
In courts, at feasts, and high solemnities,
Where most may wonder at the workmanship.
It is for homely features to keep home;
They had their name thence: coarse complexions
And cheeks of sorry grain will serve to ply
The sampler, and to tease the huswife's wool.
What need of vermeil-tinctured[2] lip for that,
Love-darting eyes, or tresses like the morn?
There was another meaning in these gifts;
Think what, and be advised; you are but young yet.

Lady. I had not thought to have unlocked my lips
In this unhallowed air, but that this juggler
Would think to charm my judgment, as mine eyes,
Obtruding false rules pranked in reason's garb.
I hate when Vice can bolt her arguments[3]
And Virtue has no tongue to check her pride.
Impostor! do not charge most innocent Nature,
As if she would her children should be riotous
With her abundance. She, good cateress,
Means her provision only to the good,
That live according to her sober laws,
And holy dictate of spare Temperance.
If every just man that now pines with want

[1] Boast. [2] Vermilion-colored.
[3] "Bolt her arguments," i.e., set them forth with fine discrimination.

Had but a moderate and beseeming share
Of that which lewdly-pampered Luxury
Now heaps upon some few with vast excess,
Nature's full blessings would be well dispensed
In unsuperfluous even proportion,
And she no whit encumbered with her store;
And then the Giver would be better thanked,
His praise due paid: for swinish gluttony
Ne'er looks to Heaven amidst his gorgeous feast,
But with besotted base ingratitude
Crams, and blasphemes his Feeder. Shall I go on?
Or have I said enow?[1] To him that dares
Arm his profane tongue with contemptuous words
Against the sun clad power of chastity,
Fain would I something say; — yet to what end?
Thou hast nor ear, nor soul, to apprehend
The sublime notion and high mystery
That must be uttered to unfold the sage
And serious doctrine of virginity;
And thou art worthy that thou shouldst not know
More happiness than this thy present lot.
Enjoy your dear wit, and gay rhetoric,
That hath so well been taught her dazzling fence;[2]
Thou art not fit to hear thyself convinced.
Yet, should I try, the uncontrollèd worth
Of this pure cause would kindle my rapt spirits
To such a flame of sacred vehemence
That dumb things would be moved to sympathize,
And the brute[3] Earth would lend her nerves, and shake,
Till all thy magic structures, reared so high,
Were shattered into heaps o'er thy false head.

Comus. She fables not. I feel that I do fear
Her words set off by some superior power;

[1] Enough. [2] Defense; swordplay. [3] Senseless.

And, though not mortal, yet a cold shuddering dew
Dips me all o'er, as when the wrath of Jove
Speaks thunder and the chains of Erebus [1]
To some of Saturn's crew. I must dissemble,
And try her yet more strongly. — Come, no more!
This is mere moral babble, and direct
Against the canon laws of our foundation.[2]
I must not suffer this; yet 'tis but the lees
And settlings of a melancholy blood.
But this will cure all straight;[3] one sip of this
Will bathe the drooping spirits in delight
Beyond the bliss of dreams. Be wise, and taste.

The BROTHERS *rush in with swords drawn, wrest his glass out of his hand, and break it against the ground: his rout make sign of resistance, but are all driven in. The* ATTENDANT SPIRIT *comes in.*

Spirit. What! have you let the false enchanter scape?
Oh, ye mistook; ye should have snatched his wand,
And bound him fast. Without his rod reversed,
And backward mutters of dissevering power,
We cannot free the Lady that sits here
In stony fetters fixed and motionless.
Yet stay: be not disturbed; now I bethink me,
Some other means I have which may be used,
Which once of Melibœus [4] old I learnt,
The soothest [5] shepherd that e'er piped on plains.

[1] A name applied to the dark and gloomy space under the earth through which the souls of the dead were obliged to pass on their way to Hades. Milton uses it here for Tartarus, the prison house into which Jupiter cast the Titans, the adherents of his father Saturn.

[2] Institution. [3] Straightway; immediately.

[4] Melibœus is the name of one of the shepherds in Virgil's Eclogues; but Milton here probably refers to the poet Spenser, who told the story in the Faerie Queene, II., x., 19.

[5] Truest.

There is a gentle nymph not far from hence,
That with moist curb sways the smooth Severn stream:
Sabrina is her name: a virgin pure;
Whilom she was the daughter of Locrine,
That had the scepter from his father Brute.[1]
She, guiltless damsel, flying the mad pursuit
Of her enragèd stepdame, Guendolen,
Commended her fair innocence to the flood
That stayed her flight with his[2] crossflowing course.
The water nymphs, that in the bottom played,
Held up their pearlèd wrists, and took her in,
Bearing her straight to aged Nereus'[3] hall;
Who, piteous of her woes, reared her lank[4] head,
And gave her to his daughters to imbathe
In nectared lavers strewed with asphodel,[5]
And through the porch and inlet of each sense
Dropt in ambrosial oils, till she revived,
And underwent a quick immortal change,
Made Goddess of the river.[6] Still she retains
Her maiden gentleness, and oft at eve
Visits the herds along the twilight meadows,
Helping all urchin blasts,[7] and ill-luck signs

[1] Brute, or Brutus, was said to have been a descendant of Æneas, and the first king of Britain. It was from him that the island derived its name. See note on line 923.

[2] Its.

[3] The good spirit of the sea, the father of the Nereids, or sea nymphs.

[4] Languid; drooping.

[5] "Nectared lavers," etc., i.e., baths into which nectar had been poured and where asphodels were growing. The asphodel was a flower found in Elysium.

[6] Geoffrey of Monmouth relates that Queen Guendolen, jealous of Sabrina and her mother, Estrildis, raised an army and made war upon Locrine. Locrine was defeated and slain, and Guendolen, assuming the government, commanded Estrildis and Sabrina to be cast into the river, which was ever afterwards called the Severn, after her.

[7] "Helping," etc., i.e., remedying the evil influences of bad fairies, such

That the shrewd meddling elf delights to make,
Which she with precious vialed liquors heals:
For which the shepherds, at their festivals,
Carol her goodness loud in rustic lays,
And throw sweet garland wreaths into her stream,
Of pansies, pinks, and gaudy daffodils;
And, as the old swain said, she can unlock
The clasping charm, and thaw the numbing spell,
If she be right invoked in warbled song;
Fair maidenhood she loves, and will be swift
To aid a virgin, such as was herself,
In hard besetting need. This will I try,
And add the power of some adjuring verse.

SONG.

Sabrina fair,
Listen where thou art sitting
Under the glassy, cool, translucent wave,
In twisted braids of lilies knitting
The loose train of thy amber-dropping hair;
Listen for dear honor's sake,
Goddess of the silver lake,
Listen and save!

Listen, and appear to us,
In name of great Oceanus,[1]
By the earth-shaking Neptune's mace,
And Tethys'[2] *grave majestic pace;*
By hoary Nereus' wrinkled look,
And the Carpathian wizard's[3] *hook;*

as the blasting of corn, etc. "Urchin" originally meant the hedgehog, but came later to be applied to goblins, imps, and, finally, to mischievous children.

1 An earlier sea god than Neptune. 2 The wife of Oceanus.

3 Proteus, the shepherd of the sea, who had the care of Neptune's flocks of seals.

By scaly Triton's[1] *winding shell,*
And old soothsaying Glaucus'[2] *spell;*
By Leucothea's[3] *lovely hands,*
And her son that rules the strands;
By Thetis'[4] *tinsel-slippered feet,*
And the songs of Sirens sweet;
By dead Parthenope's[5] *dear tomb,*
And fair Ligea's[6] *golden comb,* 880
Wherewith she sits on diamond rocks
Sleeking her soft alluring locks;
By all the nymphs that nightly dance
Upon thy streams with wily glance;
Rise, rise, and heave thy rosy head
From thy coral-paven bed,
And bridle in thy headlong wave,
Till thou our summons answered have.
Listen and save!

SABRINA *rises, attended by Water Nymphs, and sings.*

By the rushy-fringèd bank, 890
Where grows the willow and the osier dank,
My sliding chariot stays,
Thick set with agate, and the azurn sheen[7]
Of turkis[8] *blue, and emerald green,*
That in the channel strays;

[1] The son of Neptune. He is represented with a trumpet made of a winding shell, and is sometimes called the herald of the sea.

[2] A Greek fisherman who obtained a place among the sea gods, and had the power of prophecy.

[3] Ino, fleeing from her mad husband, King Athamas, leaped into the sea with her young son in her arms. The Nereids received them and made them sea deities, changing the name of Ino to Leucothea, or the "white goddess." Her son was Palæmon, the guardian of harbors.

[4] A Nereid, called "the silver-footed," the mother of Achilles.

[5] One of the Sirens, whose dead body was washed ashore on the present site of Naples.

[6] Another Siren. The name signifies "the shrill voiced."

[7] "Azurn sheen," i.e., azured gleam. [8] Turquoise.

Whilst from off the waters fleet
Thus I set my printless feet
O'er the cowslip's velvet head,
That bends not as I tread.
Gentle swain, at thy request
I am here!

Spirit. Goddess dear,
We implore thy powerful hand
To undo the charmèd band
Of true virgin here distressed
Through the force and through the wile
Of unblessed enchanter vile.
Sabrina. Shepherd, 'tis my office best
To help ensnarèd chastity.—
Brightest Lady, look on me.
Thus I sprinkle on thy breast
Drops that from my fountain pure
I have kept of precious cure;
Thrice upon thy finger's tip,
Thrice upon thy rubied lip:
Next this marble venomed seat,
Smeared with gums of glutinous heat,
I touch with chaste palms moist and cold.
Now the spell hath lost his hold;
And I must haste ere morning hour
To wait in Amphitrite's[1] bower.

SABRINA *descends, and the* LADY *rises out of her seat.*

Spirit. Virgin, daughter of Locrine,
Sprung of old Anchises'[2] line,

[1] Wife of Neptune.

[2] Anchises, a Trojan prince and father of Æneas, escaped from the Greeks at the destruction of Troy by being carried out of the burning city on the back of his son. Brutus, the grandfather of Sabrina, was the great-grandson of Æneas.

May thy brimmèd waves for this
Their full tribute never miss
From a thousand petty rills,
That tumble down the snowy hills:
Summer drouth or singèd[1] air
Never scorch thy tresses[2] fair,
Nor wet October's torrent flood
Thy molten crystal fill with mud;
May thy billows roll ashore
The beryl and the golden ore;
May thy lofty head be crowned
With many a tower and terrace round,
And here and there thy banks upon
With groves of myrrh and cinnamon.
Come, Lady; while Heaven lends us grace,
Let us fly this cursèd place,
Lest the sorcerer us entice
With some other new device.
Not a waste[3] or needless sound
Till we come to holier ground.
I shall be your faithful guide
Through this gloomy covert wide;
And not many furlongs thence
Is your father's residence,
Where this night are met in state
Many a friend to gratulate
His wished presence, and beside
All the swains that there abide
With jigs and rural dance resort.
We shall catch them at their sport,
And our sudden coming there

[1] Singeing; scorching hot.
[2] Referring to the foliage along the banks of the Severn.
[3] Useless.

Will double all their mirth and cheer.
Come, let us haste; the stars grow high,
But Night sits monarch yet in the mid sky.

The Scene changes, presenting Ludlow Town, and the President's Castle; then come in Country Dancers; after them the ATTENDANT SPIRIT, *with the* TWO BROTHERS *and the* LADY.

SONG.

Spirit. *Back, shepherds, back! Enough your play*
Till next sunshine holiday.
Here be, without duck or nod,[1]
Other trippings to be trod
Of lighter toes, and such court guise
As Mercury[2] *did first devise*
With the mincing Dryades[3]
On the lawns and on the leas.

This second Song presents them to their Father and Mother.

Noble Lord and Lady bright,
I have brought ye new delight.
Here behold so goodly grown
Three fair branches of your own.
Heaven hath timely tried their youth,
Their faith, their patience, and their truth,
And sent them here through hard assays[4]
With a crown of deathless praise,
To triumph in victorious dance
O'er sensual folly and intemperance.

The dances ended, the SPIRIT *epiloguizes.*

Spirit. To the ocean now I fly,
And those happy climes that lie

1 "Duck or nod," forms of obeisance peculiar to country folk, or servants.
2 Mercury (Hermes), the messenger of the gods, was the ideal of agility and grace.
3 Wood nymphs. 4 Trials.

Where day never shuts his eye,
Up in the broad fields of the sky.
There I suck the liquid air,
All amidst the gardens fair
Of Hesperus,[1] and his daughters three
That sing about the golden tree.
Along the crispèd shades and bowers
Revels the spruce and jocund Spring;
The Graces[2] and the rosy-bosomed Hours[3]
Thither all their bounties bring.
There eternal Summer dwells,
And west winds with musky wing
About the cedarn[4] alleys fling
Nard and cassia's[5] balmy smells.
Iris[6] there with humid bow
Waters the odorous banks, that blow
Flowers of more mingled hue
Than her purfled[7] scarf can show,
And drenches with Elysian dew
(List, mortals, if your ears be true)
Beds of hyacinth and roses,
Where young Adonis[8] oft reposes,
Waxing well of his deep wound,
In slumber soft, and on the ground

[1] See note on line 393. "The Hesperides were daughters of Hesperus, god of the West." (GUERBER.)

[2] See note on L'Allegro, line 15.

[3] The Horæ (the goddesses of the seasons) were three in number, and were the daughters of Jupiter and Themis.

[4] Cedar lined.

[5] "Nard and cassia," i.e., spikenard and aromatic laurel.

[6] See note on line 83.

[7] Embroidered.

[8] A beautiful youth, loved by Venus, and slain by a wild boar which he was hunting. On account of Venus's grief for him the gods of the lower world allowed him to return to the earth for six months every year.

Sadly sits the Assyrian queen.[1]
But far above, in spangled sheen,
Celestial Cupid, her famed son, advanced
Holds his dear Psyche,[2] sweet entranced
After her wandering labors long,
Till free consent the gods among
Make her his eternal bride,
And from her fair unspotted side
Two blissful twins are to be born,
Youth and Joy; so Jove hath sworn.
But now my task is smoothly done:
I can fly, or I can run
Quickly to the green earth's end,
Where the bowed welkin[3] slow doth bend,
And from thence can soar as soon
To the corners of the moon.
Mortals, that would follow me,
Love Virtue; she alone is free.
She can teach ye how to climb
Higher than the sphery chime;[4]
Or, if Virtue feeble were,
Heaven itself would stoop to her.

1 Venus. She was worshiped in Assyria as Astarte.

2 Psyche, the youngest of three daughters of a king, was loved by Cupid. As a punishment for distrusting him she was forced to wander from place to place and to endure many hardships. Finally, however, Cupid claimed her as his "eternal bride," and she was admitted with him among the gods.

3 "Bowed welkin," i.e., arched dome of the sky.

4 "Sphery chime," i.e., the music of the spheres; the starry choir referred to in line 112. The universe, according to the ancients, consisted of nine spheres, carrying the sun, moon, planets, and fixed stars, which in their daily revolution produced an exquisite music, too fine for mortal ears.

LYCIDAS.

In this Monody the Author bewails a learned Friend, unfortunately drowned in his passage from Chester on the Irish seas, 1637; and, by occasion, foretells the ruin of our corrupted Clergy, then in their height.

YET once more, O ye laurels,[1] and once more,
Ye myrtles brown, with ivy never sere,
I come to pluck your berries harsh and crude,
And with forced[2] fingers rude
Shatter your leaves before the mellowing year.
Bitter constraint and sad occasion dear
Compels me to disturb your season due;
For Lycidas is dead, dead ere his prime,
Young Lycidas, and hath not left his peer.
Who would not sing for Lycidas? he knew
Himself to sing, and build the lofty rhyme.
He must not float upon his watery bier
Unwept, and welter to the parching wind,
Without the meed of some melodious tear.
Begin, then, Sisters[3] of the sacred well
That from beneath the seat of Jove doth spring;
Begin, and somewhat loudly sweep the string.
Hence with denial vain and coy excuse:
So may some gentle Muse

[1] The laurel was sacred to Apollo, and has always been associated with poetry. The myrtle was sacred to Venus. Ivy was used to deck the brows of the learned, and was sacred to Bacchus. It has been suggested that Milton, in naming these three plants, intends a delicate allusion to King's poetry, beauty, and learning.

[2] Unwilling.

[3] The nine Muses. See note on Il Penseroso, line 47. By the "sacred well" the poet probably means the Pierian fountain at the foot of Mount Olympus, the birthplace of the Muses and the "seat of Jove."

With lucky words favor *my* destined urn,[1]
And as he passes, turn
And bid fair peace be to my sable shroud![2]
For we were nursed upon the selfsame hill,
Fed the same flock, by fountain, shade, and rill;[3]
Together both, ere the high lawns appeared
Under the opening eyelids of the Morn,
We drove a-field, and both together heard
What time the gray-fly winds her sultry horn,[4]
Battening[5] our flocks with the fresh dews of night,
Oft till the star that rose at evening bright
Towards heaven's descent had sloped his westering wheel.
Meanwhile the rural ditties were not mute;
Tempered to the oaten flute,[6]
Rough Satyrs danced, and Fauns[7] with cloven heel
From the glad sound would not be absent long;
And old Damœtas[8] loved to hear our song.
But, oh! the heavy change, now thou art gone,
Now thou art gone and never must return!
Thee, Shepherd, thee the woods and desert caves,

[1] "My destined urn," i.e., my approaching or inevitable death. The Romans deposited the ashes of their dead in urns.

[2] "Sable shroud," i.e., dark tomb.

[3] "For we were nursed," etc. Referring to the fact of their companionship at college, and the sameness of their tastes and pursuits.

[4] "Winds," etc., i.e., hums in the noontide heat.

[5] Feeding; fattening.

[6] "Meanwhile," etc. Reference is made to the early poetical attempts of Milton and King. The "oaten flute" was made of reeds or straws, and was a favorite musical instrument among shepherds; hence it is emblematic of pastoral poetry. The poets of this age were fond of representing their calling as that of shepherds.

[7] The Satyrs of Greek mythology were represented as of a pleasure-loving nature, always engaged in dance and song. The Roman Fauns—half men, half goats—were of a similar nature.

[8] A name frequently used in pastoral poetry. It is supposed to refer here to some "well-remembered Fellow of Christ's College."

With wild thyme and the gadding vine o'ergrown,
And all their echoes, mourn.
The willows, and the hazel copses green,
Shall now no more be seen
Fanning their joyous leaves to thy soft lays.
As killing as the canker to the rose,
Or taintworm to the weanling herds that graze,
Or frost to flowers, that their gay wardrobe wear,
When first the whitethorn blows;
Such, Lycidas, thy loss to shepherd's ear.
Where were ye, Nymphs, when the remorseless deep
Closed o'er the head of your loved Lycidas?
For neither were ye playing on the steep[1]
Where your old bards, the famous Druids, lie,
Nor on the shaggy top of Mona[2] high,
Nor yet where Deva[3] spreads her wizard stream.
Ay me! I fondly dream
"Had ye been there,"—for what could that have done?
What could the Muse[4] herself that Orpheus bore,
The Muse herself, for her enchanting son,
Whom universal nature did lament,
When, by the rout that made the hideous roar,
His gory visage down the stream was sent,
Down the swift Hebrus to the Lesbian shore?
Alas! what boots it with uncessant care
To tend the homely, slighted, shepherd's trade,

[1] "The steep," etc., probably Penmaenmawr in Wales, an old Druidic burial place.

[2] The wooded heights of the island of Anglesey, the favorite haunt of the Welsh Druids.

[3] The river Dee, the ancient boundary between England and Wales, and for that reason regarded with a kind of superstitious reverence.

[4] Calliope, the mother of Orpheus. The Thracian women, celebrating the orgies of Bacchus, became enraged at Orpheus, tore him in pieces, and threw his remains into the river Hebrus. His head was washed ashore on the island of Lesbos.

And strictly meditate the thankless Muse?
Were it not better done, as others use,[1]
To sport with Amaryllis[2] in the shade,
Or with the tangles of Neæra's[2] hair?
Fame is the spur that the clear[3] spirit doth raise
(That last infirmity of noble mind)
To scorn delights and live laborious days;
But the fair guerdon when we hope to find,
And think to burst out into sudden blaze,
Comes the blind Fury[4] with the abhorrèd shears,
And slits the thin-spun life. "But not the praise,"
Phœbus[5] replied, and touched my trembling ears:
"Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil,
Nor in the glistering foil
Set off to the world, nor in broad rumor lies,[6]
But lives and spreads aloft by those pure eyes
And perfect witness of all-judging Jove;
As he pronounces lastly on each deed,
Of so much fame in heaven expect thy meed."
O fountain Arethuse,[7] and thou honored flood,
Smooth-sliding Mincius,[8] crowned with vocal reeds,
That strain I heard was of a higher mood.

1 Are accustomed to do.

2 Amaryllis and Neæra are names of shepherdesses in the Greek and Latin pastorals.

3 Noble; pure.

4 It was one of the Fates, Atropos, and not a Fury, that was said to cut the threads of life. In speaking of her as blind, the poet means to imply that she knows no distinction. See Thumann's picture of the three Fates in Guerber's Myths of Greece and Rome.

5 Apollo is here referred to as the god of song.

6 "Fame is no plant," etc., i.e., fame is not a product merely of this life, nor does it consist in the superficial glitter which delights the world, nor in the widespread notoriety which some men attain.

7 A fountain near Syracuse, sacred to the nymph Arethusa; here mentioned in allusion to the Sicilian poet, Theocritus, who was born there.

8 A river in northern Italy, famous as flowing past the birthplace of Virgil.

But now my oat[1] proceeds,
And listens to the Herald of the Sea,[2]
That came in Neptune's plea.
He asked the waves, and asked the felon winds,
What hard mishap hath doomed this gentle swain?
And questioned every gust of rugged wings
That blows from off each beakèd promontory.
They knew not of his story;
And sage Hippotades[3] their answer brings,
That not a blast was from his dungeon strayed:
The air was calm, and on the level brine
Sleek Panope[4] with all her sisters played.
It was that fatal and perfidious bark,
Built in the eclipse,[5] and rigged with curses dark,
That sunk so low that sacred head of thine.
Next, Camus,[6] reverend sire, went footing slow,
His mantle hairy, and his bonnet sedge,[7]
Inwrought with figures dim,[8] and on the edge
Like to that sanguine flower inscribed with woe.[9]
"Ah! who hath reft," quoth he, "my dearest pledge?"

[1] My pastoral muse. See note on line 33 above.

[2] Triton, son of Neptune, comes forward in the name of his father to make a judicial inquiry concerning the cause of the shipwreck in which Lycidas had perished.

[3] Æolus, king of the winds and son of Hippotes.

[4] A sea nymph, one of the daughters of Nereus. See note on Nereus, Comus, line 835.

[5] It was a very common superstition that eclipses brought misfortune upon all undertakings that were begun or completed during their appearance.

[6] The genius of the river Cam, and of Cambridge University.

[7] "The 'mantle hairy' is the hairy river weed that is found floating on the Cam; and the 'bonnet' is the sedge that grows in the river and along its edge." (BELL.)

[8] Showing the antiquity of Cambridge.

[9] "Sanguine flower," etc., referring to the hyacinth. Hyacinthus was a youth beloved by Apollo, and accidentally slain by him while playing at quoits. From his blood sprang the flower which bears his name, on the leaves of which are certain marks said to resemble the Greek word AI ("alas!").

Last came, and last did go,
The Pilot[1] of the Galilean Lake;
Two massy keys he bore of metals twain
(The golden opes, the iron shuts amain).
He shook his mitered locks,[2] and stern bespake: —
"How well could I have spared for thee, young swain,[3]
Enow of such as,[4] for their bellies' sake,
Creep, and intrude, and climb into the fold!
Of other care they little reckoning make
Than how to scramble at the shearers' feast,
And shove away the worthy bidden guest.
Blind mouths! that scarce themselves know how to hold
A sheephook, or have learnt aught else the least
That to the faithful herdman's art belongs!
What recks it them?[5] What need they? They are sped;[6]
And, when they list, their lean and flashy songs
Grate on their scrannel[7] pipes of wretched straw;
The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed,
But, swoln with wind and the rank mist they draw,
Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread;
Besides what the grim wolf[8] with privy paw
Daily devours apace, and nothing said.
But that two-handed engine at the door

1 St. Peter. In Christian art he is always represented with two keys in his hands; the one to open the gates of heaven, the other, to close them by force. See Comus, line 13.

2 "Mitered locks," i.e., his head crowned with a bishop's headdress, or miter.

3 "For thee, young swain." Edward King had been educated for the Church, and was about to be ordained.

4 "Enow of such," etc. From here to the end of line 131, reference is made to Archbishop Laud and the debased character of the clergy during his administration. Laud had now been archbishop for five years.

5 "What recks it them?" i.e., what do they care?

6 Provided for.

7 Meager; thin.

8 Milton refers here to the Roman Catholic Church and its converts.

Stands ready to smite once, and smite no more."[1]
Return, Alpheus;[2] the dread voice is past
That shrunk thy streams; return, Sicilian Muse,[3]
And call the vales, and bid them hither cast
Their bells and flowerets of a thousand hues.
Ye valleys low, where the mild whispers use
Of shades, and wanton winds, and gushing brooks,
On whose fresh lap the swart star[4] sparely looks,
Throw hither all your quaint enameled eyes,
That on the green turf suck the honeyed showers,
And purple all the ground with vernal flowers.
Bring the rathe[5] primrose that forsaken dies,
The tufted crowtoe, and pale jessamine,
The white pink, and the pansy freaked with jet,
The glowing violet,
The musk rose, and the well-attired woodbine,
With cowslips wan that hang the pensive head,
And every flower that sad embroidery wears;
Bid amaranthus all his[6] beauty shed,
And daffadillies[7] fill their cups with tears,
To strew the laureate hearse[8] where Lycid lies.
For so, to interpose a little ease,

[1] "But that two-handed engine," etc., i.e., but the instrument of retribution is ready, and will soon bring swift and complete punishment upon the corrupted clergy. See the latter part of the argument, or note, immediately following the title to this poem.

[2] The river god who was the lover of Arethusa, and made one with her in the fountain near Syracuse; hence, like her, symbolizing pastoral poetry.

[3] The Muse of pastoral poetry.

[4] Sirius, the Dog Star; called swart, or swarthy, on account of its supposed influence upon vegetation, being in the ascendency during the hottest months of the year.

[5] Early. [6] Its. See note on Comus, line 248.

[7] Daffodils; meaning the same as asphodels, from the Greek name of a flower of the lily family.

[8] "Laureate hearse," i.e., poet's tomb. See Note 1, p. 66.

Let our frail thoughts dally with false surmise.
Ay me! whilst thee the shores and sounding seas
Wash far away, where'er thy bones are hurled;
Whether beyond the stormy Hebrides,
Where thou perhaps under the whelming tide
Visit'st the bottom of the monstrous world;
Or whether thou, to our moist vows[1] denied,
Sleep'st by the fable of Bellerus[2] old,
Where the great Vision[3] of the guarded mount
Looks towards Namancos and Bayona's hold.[4]
Look homeward, Angel,[5] now, and melt with ruth:
And, O ye dolphins,[6] waft the hapless youth.

Weep no more, woeful shepherds, weep no more,
For Lycidas, your sorrow, is not dead,
Sunk though he be beneath the watery floor.
So sinks the day-star[7] in the ocean bed,
And yet anon repairs his drooping head,
And tricks his beams, and with new-spangled ore[8]
Flames in the forehead of the morning sky:
So Lycidas sunk low, but mounted high,
Through the dear might of Him that walked the waves,[9]
Where, other groves and other streams along,

1 "Moist vows," i.e., tearful prayers.

2 "Fable of Bellerus," i.e., fabled Bellerus. Bellerus is the name of a Cornish giant, so called from Bellerium, the ancient name of Land's End, Cornwall.

3 The vision of St. Michael, on St. Michael's Mount, near Land's End. The mountain is spoken of as "guarded," in allusion to the legend of the archangel's appearance on one of its crags.

4 Namancos and Bayona were near Cape Finisterre in Spain, and in the direct line of vision southwestward from Land's End.

5 St. Michael.

6 The allusion is to the story of the musician Arion, who, having thrown himself into the sea to escape from pirates, was taken up by dolphins, and carried on their backs safe to land.

7 The sun. 8 Gold. 9 See Matt. xiv. 25.

With nectar pure his oozy locks he laves,
And hears the unexpressive[1] nuptial song,[2]
In the blest kingdoms meek of joy and love.
There entertain him all the Saints above,
In solemn troops, and sweet societies,
That sing, and singing in their glory move,
And wipe the tears forever from his eyes.[3]
Now, Lycidas, the shepherds weep no more;
Henceforth thou art the Genius[4] of the shore,
In thy large recompense,[5] and shalt be good
To all that wander in that perilous flood.

Thus sang the uncouth swain to the oaks and rills,
While the still morn went out with sandals gray:
He touched the tender stops of various quills,
With eager thought warbling his Doric lay:[6]
And now the sun had stretched out[7] all the hills,
And now was dropt into the western bay.
At last he rose, and twitched[8] his mantle blue:
To-morrow to fresh woods, and pastures new.

[1] Inexpressible.

[2] "Nuptial song," i.e., marriage hymn. See Rev. xix. 6, 7, 9.

[3] See Isaiah xxv. 8, and Rev. vii. 17.

[4] Guardian spirit.

[5] "In thy large recompense," i.e., as a great recompense to thee.

[6] The ancient pastoral poets wrote in the Doric dialect. A "Doric lay," therefore, is a pastoral poem or song.

[7] "Stretched out," i.e., lengthened the shadows of.

[8] Drew closely about him.

JOHN MILTON.

PERHAPS no age was fraught with more vital interest for English and American history than that of John Milton. And perhaps no author more resolutely took his part in a great national struggle, and so completely dedicated his talents to the defense of a great cause. Every one of Milton's works, prose and poetry, has a distinct bearing upon the public questions of his time, and is understood clearly only in relation to the time when it was written.

It has already been pointed out in the introduction that Milton was an active participator in the great fight for religious and political liberty against ecclesiastical and royal encroachments. It only remains to make this a little more clear to the reader not familiar with English history. To those who were taking their share in the fight, the question of religious liberty was not often distinguished from that of political liberty; yet it will be well for us to take up each of these in turn.

To Americans, who see the government look upon all religious sects with equal toleration, it seems somewhat of an incongruity to have a national government favor one particular creed. Yet this is exactly what now takes place in almost every country in Europe. In England the State Church, or Established Church, is the so-called Episcopal Church or Church of England. It grew out of a compromise made during the Reformation, between the Catholic party on the one side, and the extreme Protestant party on the other. The object was to frame a church government and dogma which could attract people from both parties. In spirit the church was Protestant, in form almost Catholic.

As is natural with all compromises, this new church failed entirely to attract to it extremists of either party. Even during the reign of Queen Elizabeth there had been a strong Catholic reaction against the Established Church, which reached its crisis during the years

that immediately preceded the defeat of the Spanish Armada, when plot after plot was aimed at Elizabeth's life with the object of placing Mary Queen of Scots on the throne, and establishing the Catholic worship again in England. The Spanish Armada, however, put a rest to Catholic activity for many years to come. During all this while the extreme Protestants had not been idle. While Catholic supremacy threatened all Protestants alike, they had loyally upheld the arms of Elizabeth; but when that danger was past, they became more and more insistent that there be made a few changes in church government which would make it savor less strongly of Rome.

After the succession of James, the son of Mary Queen of Scots, who understood his people less than almost any English king—and there have been many of them who possessed more than their share of stupidity—matters went from bad to worse. Not only did he refuse to grant even the mildest church reforms, but, freed from danger from the English Catholics, he courted the friendship of Catholics in Spain and France. Exasperated by the growing obstinacy of these extreme Protestants, or Puritans as they had been called for some time, he and the leaders in the church passed stringent laws against Nonconformers. These instead of healing the disorder merely aggravated the symptoms.

Nor must it be supposed that these Puritans formed a homogeneous party. Protestantism is in its essence a revolt against every party, and a setting up of the individual as the sole arbiter in the matter of religion. This extreme position, however, was not taken at first by many Protestants. But by the outbreak of the Civil War (1642) these extreme Puritans numbered a considerable party, the Independents, or as they are better known to-day, the Congregationalists. They desired complete religious toleration, the privilege for each congregation to worship God as it saw fit. To this party belonged Milton and Cromwell; and it was this party that made the most enthusiastic fighters in the War, and that finally beheaded King Charles I. An older and stronger body of Puritans were the Calvinists or Presbyterians, taking as their model of church government the one established by John Calvin at Geneva. Both parties were heartily in accord in their abhorrence of church government by bishops, of church altars, surpliced choirs, and any other forms or observances that detracted from the simplicity of worship of the primitive church.

But especially galling to the Puritans was the support which the religious tyranny gave to the growing abuse of power by the crown and its advisers. Archbishop Laud, as the head of the Church of England, was the close confidant of Charles I, and seconded his every effort to bring the neck of the people under the yoke.

"God . . . made you a little God, to sit on his Throne, and rule over men." This reads like queer advice, but the words were written by James I to his son Charles when he was all of five years old. It was the same king who wrote to Parliament, "Kings are not only God's lieutenants upon earth, and sit upon God's throne, but even by God himself they are called Gods." This might be acceptable to some light-thoughted courtiers, but to men of the type of mind of Milton, and to men who made thoughts of God and Infinity their chiefest daily concern, it was hardly edifying reading. And King James I and his son Charles I attempted to carry out this program in their government.

That such an attempt, judging by the past history of England, would be foredoomed to failure, ought not to have been doubted. Elizabeth, even in the height of her popularity, had never ventured on any course of action against the expressed wishes of her subjects. Though she understood and insisted upon the divine right of kings, and the necessity of obedience for subjects, she also knew how to retire gracefully from an untenable position. But these kings had at their elbows apparently clear-sighted statesmen, men like Lord Bacon, who fostered the notion of royal irresponsibility to their subjects. And when it became necessary for them to respect parliamentary pressure, they did so sullenly and with implied threats of speedy retribution.

Such was the clash of opinions during the age when Milton lived and wrote. We can turn now to glance for a moment at the state of literature and thought.

The age of Elizabeth had been an age of joyous exercise of all the natural powers of thought as well as of action. There was the apparent spontaneity of childhood. Enthusiasm was the watchword for all that men undertook. They had been eager students of both man and nature, but they had rarely looked upon the one with the eyes of a scientist, or upon the other with the desire to penetrate into the secrets of the why and wherefore of his life upon this earth.

Like children, again, they took life and nature as they found them and reveled in them.

Now this was all changed. Gloomy days succeeded the glorious spring of Elizabeth's reign. Hardly had her reign come to a close when we find Shakespeare turning from his joyous comedies to his deepest tragedies. The most popular writer of comedies, Ben Jonson, wrote plays filled with a humor very different from that which radiated gladness and pure fun in *As You Like it* and *Twelfth Night*. We have seen how serious were the problems that called loudly for solution, and before such the human mind cannot preserve its healthful gayety.

As there were two parties in the State,—those who sided with the king and the court, the Cavaliers, and those who threw their lot with the Parliament, of whom the Puritans were the most active party,—so there were, in general, two parties of writers. There were the court poets, who like the courtiers persisted to the last in a mad chase of pleasure, knowing full well that the day of reckoning was at hand, and bound to get as much wild gayety as the narrow time would afford. Yet under this mask of gayety there was the quivering lip, for life is so short and its pleasures so fleeting. Of all the court poets the most exquisite was Robert Herrick, and we over and over again catch the note of sadness, that sounds like an undertone to all of his most joyous poems.

Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,
Old Time is yet a-flying;
And this same flower that smiles to-day,
To-morrow will be dying.

There is a hilarity about much of the work of these court poets that reminds us of nothing quite so much as of a drunken orgy before a dreadful battle. And yet their moments of sober thought would come, when they would write with almost equally feverish eagerness a paraphrase of a penitential psalm or a religious hymn.

Opposed to these were the poets and writers who wrote with a distinctly religious or theological purpose. In 1611 the Authorized Translation of the Bible was published, the labor of the best scholars of the time. It was perhaps vainly hoped that it would settle the religious problems that were uppermost. Shortly before, the scholar Hooker had written his great work on Ecclesiastical Polity, a masterly

defense of the Episcopal Church. If the Puritans produced little real literature in the battle of pamphlets that raged for years, it was not because they were devoid of either seriousness or ability to urge their side.

But of religious poems there were more than England had known to that time. Of these Robert Herrick has given us not a few, though he to the last remained in spirit a courtier. John Donne, in his later life, atoned for the love lyrics of his early years by volumes of religious poems. Many attempts at epics were made on subjects drawn from sacred history. If we glance over the mass of poetry that was then produced, of which the most has long been forgotten, we see that by far the greater part was of a deeply serious or religious nature. The majority of the people were in no mood to receive only the lively songs of the cavalier poets.

We must note a rise in importance of a body of serious-minded men, who so far had not often been seen in England, the philosophers and scientists. The age of Elizabeth had been one of Romance, now it was a time of observation and thought. Bacon came after Shakespeare. Scientists spent their time examining man and nature, not as something to be enjoyed but to be studied, analyzed and classified. Even men who had, during the age of Elizabeth, been foremost among the romanticists now were tinged with this all-pervading gravity. It is a melancholy picture to see the old Sir Walter Raleigh, a prisoner in the Tower, giving up for the time his ideal of an English empire over the seas, and writing his serious *History of the World.* And one sentence in that great work gives us a keynote of the thought of the age.

"O eloquent, just and mighty Death! whom none could advise thou hast persuaded; what none hath dared thou hast done; and whom all the world hath flattered thou only hast cast out of the world and despised, thou hast drawn together all the star-stretched greatness, all the pride, cruelty, and ambition of man, and covered it all over with these two narrow words: *Hic jacet!*"

It was an age of other-worldliness, of melancholy, not the capricious pouting of a child that cannot have the toy he wishes, but a deep-seated feeling that life has a far deeper meaning than the mere pleasures we may get out of it, that its roots are inextricably bound up with the past and the future, that its joys must be sober joys, and

that man must live with his eyes fastened upon Infinity. The age was ripe for a Milton.

And now let us see what kind of a man this John Milton was, who was born in London only five years after James came to the throne, and whose youth was passed while these mighty problems of politics and religion were still in the arena of discussion, and who had barely arrived at manhood when they passed to the battlefield.

"He that would hope to write well hereafter in laudable things, ought himself to be a true poem; that is, a composition and pattern of the best and most honorable things." These are Milton's own words defining a true poet. Before a man can become a leader of thought, and a quickener of ideals, he must first develop in himself the ideal man. He knew that man is more than mortal, and to gain the power he sought he went with "devout prayer to that Eternal Spirit who can enrich with all utterance and knowledge." Here are perhaps the secrets of Milton's power. No poet ever more consciously set himself apart for the consecration of the poet's life. No one more consistently followed out the ideal he had set himself.

His early youth was passed amid an atmosphere of serious study, music and poetry. His father was a quiet scholar and a musician of no common merit. And it is to him that he owed the early bent of his life to study, and his delicate ear for the subtly musical power of words. He had the best of masters when at school; and when he went to college, if his career was not as brilliant as it might have been, it was probably because he saw that there were many husks mixed with the grain in a college training, and he carefully selected only the grain. He would not mold his life according to the academic forms of his time, for he saw that, to a soul like his, any mold that does not allow full play to all the poetic faculties is intolerable.

Milton matured late. He wrote little poetry while at college, chiefly in Latin. One or two in English gave promise of his future power. *The Hymn on the Morning of Christ's Nativity* contained some of the boldest flights of the imagination into the sublime that had so far appeared in English literature, and let us see in this young man of twenty-one the poet of the *Paradise Lost.* But Milton wrote fewer "early poems" than any other English poet. Or if he wrote them he ruthlessly sacrificed them, holding back only the best, in his desire to leave nothing except what the world would not willingly

let die. On the twenty-third anniversary in a sonnet he complains that he is approaching manhood only in years, not in deeds.

He was careful in his work. Of this period he said afterwards "whether aught was imposed upon me by them that had the overlooking, or betaken to of my own choice, in English or other tongue, prosing or versing, but chiefly the latter, the style by certain vital signs it had was likely to live." But strangely, he did not regard himself at this age as fitted to take up poetry as his life's labor. Time must yet be spent in completing his education. He must retire into himself and study his own powers. This he did during a five years' stay at his father's country place at Horton. He must study the political and religious questions of the time. He must travel and get the best he could from the learned in France and Italy. But this slow development, through conscious restraint, reached maturity in a completely rounded manhood.

Milton's life has been divided into three periods.

1. The period of his preparation for his life's work, which was closed in 1638 on his return from Italy. During this time he wrote little more than the poems in this volume. At its close he felt that poetry and music must, at least, for a while, be set aside for the sterner duty of lending his aid in the great fight soon to be waged for civil and religious liberty.

2. The period of his participation in the struggle against civil and religious tyranny. He then wrote practically nothing but prose. This period was closed in 1660 by the return of the king, and the apparent loss of everything he had championed.

3. The last period when he again found himself in poetry, and composed the *Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes*.

With the last two periods we have nothing to do here. But it is interesting to see that even in his earliest poems he clearly showed traits that distinguish his work to the end of his life.

One of the things that strikes us most forcibly when we read Milton's life and his poems, is the strength of his character, and his power to perform resolutely the task he had in hand. Life with him was no May-day game with pure pleasure as its aim. Like most of the men of his time he was impressed with the seriousness of the times and of his mission. In his twenty-third year, while at college, he lamented that few signs of maturing powers showed themselves. Mere college

life and application to his studies did not fill his ambition. Later he wrote his joyous *L'Allegro*, in which he reveled in the noblest of delights; but he instantly followed it by the ode to melancholy, or seriousness, in *Il Penseroso*. And of the two poems it is not difficult to imagine which came nearer to expressing his own ideal.

So it was through all his life. He knew the pure joy of life, the beauty of nature and of the human heart. There is as much beauty, if not more, in passages in *Paradise Lost* as there is in the beautiful spring poem *L'Allegro*. But he turned away from pure beauty and joy for its own sake, and set his heart on the more serious aspects of life. For he knew that if man master the deeper problems of duty and obedience to the great laws of the universe, he can turn with double delight and with fuller understanding to a contemplation of the beautiful in man and nature.

And it was this feeling of the serious nature of the problem that England was then facing, that made Milton, the poet, become Milton, the secretary of the Commonwealth, and the defender of the regicides. For had not Charles attempted to set at naught some of the principles which Englishmen had grown to recognize as their inherent birthright?

As is pointed out in the Introduction, the spirit of *L'Allegro* is that of the best of the lighter singers of his day, the court or cavalier poets. The *Il Penseroso* gives the feelings of the more thoughtful of the time, and of these a large number were Puritans. Thus before us are set the two ideals that were engaging people's attention at that time. He knew both, could share the emotions of both, but deliberately selected the latter when he saw to what the former might lead.

The choice is not clearly indicated in these two poems, but in the third, *Comus*, Milton unmistakably takes sides. In the figure of Comus we have undoubtedly sketched allegorically the depths to which the court vices of the time were inevitably leading. Comus speaks some of the most beautiful poetry that Milton, or any other English poet, ever wrote in praise of beauty and a life of pleasure. A sip from the glass Comus offered the lady would bring rest and delight. But by the glass is clearly typified sin, and the gift is scornfully rejected. The ease and pleasure sung and celebrated by courtiers and poets, like Comus' glass, though full of promise to those who indulge, bring nothing but ugliness and deformity of character. So

Milton, the poet who knew the best in Cavalier and Puritan, chose the latter, for in it only he saw the beauty of Virtue.

> Mortals, that would follow me
> Love Virtue; she alone is free.
> She can teach ye how to climb
> Higher than the sphery chime;
> Or, if Virtue feeble were,
> Heaven itself would stoop to her.

If *Comus* marks his final break from the ideals of court poets, and its meaning—if we need mention what is obvious—is the degrading power of sin, in *Lycidas* he gives us an approximate date for his final break from the Established English Church. Milton was at first intended for the church. But he came to see clearly the corrupting influences at work in it, and above all the insincerity of many of its ministers. So he wrote into this poem what is perhaps the sharpest satire in the English language. Milton was never more a Puritan than when he wrote this poem. He had selected for himself the Puritan ideal of Duty instead of the ideal of Pleasure that had grown up since the Renaissance.

And now, finally, a word about reading these poems. To be appreciated fully they must be read aloud. Milton understood fully the musical power of words, and every line he wrote has its subtle harmony. At first his language may seem a little quaint, and his meaning obscure, chiefly on account of the numerous classical allusions. But if these be understood, and that is the purpose of the notes (and where the notes seem insufficient a classical dictionary can be appealed to), the poems after a second or third reading will grow on the reader. It will be like the breaking of day on an exquisite landscape, at first the objects are indistinct in the twilight, but with the first rays of the sun the whole picture stands revealed in its full glory.

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS AND TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION.

1. Changes in political conditions between 1600 and 1650.
2. What is Puritanism?
3. How may Milton be called a Puritan Poet?
4. Analysis of the poems *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*.

5. Compare and contrast the poems.
6. Plot of *Comus*.
7. Dramatic and undramatic elements in *Comus*.
8. Purpose of the lyrics in *Comus*.
9. Examples of beautiful imagery in *Comus*.
10. What are the Puritan and what the Classical elements in *Comus?*
11. Analysis of *Lycidas*.
12. Puritanism in *Lycidas*.

BIBLIOGRAPHY.

The works mentioned in this list are quite within the grasp of pupils of secondary school age.

Garnett, Life of Milton (*Great Writers Series*).
Pattison, Life of Milton (*English Men of Letters Series*).
Corson, Introduction to Milton.
Raleigh, Milton.
Macaulay, Essay on Milton.

ECLECTIC ENGLISH CLASSICS

Addison's Sir Roger de Coverley Papers (Underwood)
Arnold's Sohrab and Rustum (Tanner)
Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress (Jones and Arnold)
Burke's Conciliation with America (Clark)
Speeches at Bristol (Bergin)
Burns's Poems—Selections (Venable)
Byron's Childe Harold (Canto IV), Prisoner of Chillon, Mazeppa, and other Selections (Venable)
Carlyle's Essay on Burns (Miller)
Chaucer's Prologue and Knighte's Tale (Van Dyke)
Coleridge's Rime of the Ancient Mariner (Garrigues)
Cooper's Pilot (Watrous)
The Spy (Barnes)
Defoe's History of the Plague in London (Sylc)
Robinson Crusoe (Stephens)
De Quincey's Revolt of the Tartars
Dickens's Christmas Carol and Cricket on the Hearth (Wannamaker)
Tale of Two Cities (Pearce)
Dryden's Palamon and Arcite (Bates)
Eliot's Silas Marner (McKitrick)
Emerson's American Scholar, Self-Reliance, Compensation (Smith)
Franklin's Autobiography (Reid)
Goldsmith's Vicar of Wakefield (Hansen)
Deserted Village (See **Gray's** Elegy)
Gray's Elegy in a Country Churchyard, and **Goldsmith's** Deserted Village (Van Dyke)
Hughes's Tom Brown's School Days (Gosling).
Irving's Sketch Book—Selections (St. John)
Tales of a Traveler (Rutland)
Lincoln's Addresses and Letters (Moores)
Address at Cooper Union (See **Macaulay's** Speeches on Copyright)
Macaulay's Essay on Addison (Matthews)
Essay on Milton (Mead)

Macaulay's Essays on Lord Clive and Warren Hastings (Holmes)
Lays of Ancient Rome and other Poems (Atkinson)
Life of Johnson (Lucas)
Speeches on Copyright, and **Lincoln's** Address at Cooper Union (Pittenger)

Milton's L'Allegro, Il Penseroso, Comus, Lycidas (Buck)
Paradise Lost. Books I and II (Stephens)

Old Ballads (Morton).

Old Testament Narratives (Baldwin)

Poe's Selected Poems and Tales (Stott)

Pope's Homer's Iliad. Books I, VI, XXII, and XXIV
Rape of the Lock and Essay on Man (Van Dyke)

Ruskin's Sesame and Lilies (Rounds)

Scott's Abbot
Ivanhoe (Schreiber)
Lady of the Lake (Bacon)
Marmion (Coblentz)
Quentin Durward (Norris)
Woodstock

Shakespeare's As You Like It (North)
Hamlet (Shower)
Henry V (Law)
Julius Cæsar (Baker)
Macbeth (Livengood)
Merchant of Venice (Blakely)
Midsummer Night's Dream (Haney)
The Tempest (Barley).
Twelfth Night (Weld)

Southey's Life of Nelson

Stevenson's Inland Voyage and Travels with a Donkey (Armstrong)
Treasure Island (Fairley)

Swift's Gulliver's Travels (Gaston)

Tennyson's Idylls of the King—Selections (Willard)
Princess (Shryock)

Thackeray's Henry Esmond (Bissell)

Washington's Farewell Address, and **Webster's** First Bunker Hill Oration (Lewis)

Webster's Bunker Hill Orations (See also **Washington's** Farewell Address)

Wordsworth's Poems—Selections (Venable)

ADVERTISEMENTS

A PUNCTUATION PRIMER

By FRANCES M. PERRY, Associate Professor of Rhetoric and Composition, Wellesley College.

THE Punctuation Primer is a manual of first principles or essentials simply and systematically presented; it is not an elaborate treatise on punctuation. It offers a few fundamental principles that are flexible and comprehensive, and easily understood and remembered. The meaning of the text to be punctuated and the grammatical structure of the sentence are made the bases for generalization and division.

¶ The discussion is taken up under two main divisions: The terminal punctuation of sentences, and the punctuation of elements within sentences. Under punctuation of elements within sentences, the punctuation of principal elements, of dependent elements, of coördinate elements, of independent elements, and of implied elements are considered in the order given.

¶ In addition, several important related topics are treated, such as paragraphing, quotations, capitalization, compound words, word divisions, the uses of the apostrophe, the preparation and the correction of manuscript, conventional forms for letters, the use of authorities in writing themes, the correction of themes, and the making of bibliographies.

¶ Throughout the carefully selected examples make clear the meaning of the text, while the exercises provided at each stage of the work afford the student practice in the correct application of the principles.

¶ Though written primarily to meet the needs of college freshmen, the primer is an excellent manual for high schools.

AMERICAN BOOK COMPANY
(S.84)

INTRODUCTORY COURSE IN ARGUMENTATION

By FRANCES M. PERRY, Instructor in English in Wellesley College.

AN INTRODUCTORY COURSE IN ARGUMENTATION is intended for those who have not previously studied the subject, but while it makes a firm foundation for students who may wish to continue it, the volume is complete in itself. It is adapted for use in the first years of college or in the upper classes of secondary schools.

¶ The subject has been simplified as much as has been possible without lessening its educative value, yet no difficulties have been slighted. The beginner is set to work to exercise his reasoning power on familiar material and without the added difficulty of research. Persuasion has not been considered until conviction is fully understood. The two methods in use in teaching argumentation—the brief-drawing method and the syllogistic method—have been combined, so that the one will help the student to grasp the other.

¶ The volume is planned and proportioned with the expectation that it will be closely followed as a text-book rather than used to supplement an independent method of presentation. To that end each successive step is given explicit exposition and full illustration, and carefully graded exercises are provided to test the student's understanding of an idea, and fix it in his memory.

¶ The course is presented in three divisions; the first relating to finding and formulating the proposition for argument, the second to proving the proposition, and the last, to finding the material to prove the proposition—research.

AMERICAN BOOK COMPANY
(S. 103)

INTRODUCTORY COURSE IN EXPOSITION

By FRANCES M. PERRY, Associate Professor of Rhetoric and Composition, Wellesley College.

EXPOSITION is generally admitted to be the most commonly used form of discourse, and its successful practice develops keen observation, deliberation, sound critical judgment, and clear and concise expression. Unfortunately, however, expository courses often fail to justify the prevailing estimate of the value of exposition, because the subject has been presented in an unsystematized manner without variety or movement.

¶ The aim of this book is to provide a systematized course in the theory and practice of expository writing. The student will acquire from its study a clear understanding of exposition — its nature; its two processes, definition and analysis; its three functions, impersonal presentation or transcript, interpretation, and interpretative presentation; and the special application of exposition in literary criticism. He will also gain, through the practice required by the course, facility in writing in a clear and attractive way the various types of exposition. The volume includes an interesting section on literary criticism.

¶ The method used is direct exposition, amply reinforced by examples and exercises. The illustrative matter is taken from many and varied sources, but much of it is necessarily modern. The book meets the needs of students in the final years of secondary schools, or the first years of college.

AMERICAN BOOK COMPANY
(S.93)

HALLECK'S NEW ENGLISH LITERATURE

By REUBEN POST HALLECK, M. A., LL. D.
author of History of English Literature, and History of American Literature.

THIS New English Literature preserves the qualities which have caused the author's former History of English Literature to be so widely used; namely, suggestiveness, clearness, organic unity, interest, and power to awaken thought and to stimulate the student to further reading.

¶ Here are presented the new facts which have recently been brought to light, and the new points of view which have been adopted. More attention is paid to recent writers. The present critical point of view concerning authors, which has been brought about by the new social spirit, is reflected. Many new and important facts concerning the Elizabethan theater and the drama of Shakespeare's time are incorporated.

¶ Other special features are the unusually detailed Suggested Readings that follow each chapter, suggestions and references for a literary trip to England, historical introductions to the chapters, careful treatment of the modern drama, and a new and up-to-date bibliography.

¶ Over 200 pictures selected for their pedagogical value and their unusual character appear in their appropriate places in connection with the text. The frontispiece, in colors, shows the performance of an Elizabethan play in the Fortune Theater.

AMERICAN BOOK COMPANY

(S. 90)

A HISTORY OF AMERICAN LITERATURE

By REUBEN POST HALLECK, M.A.,
Principal, Male High School, Louisville, Ky.

A COMPANION volume to the author's History of English Literature. It describes the greatest achievements in American literature from colonial times to the present, placing emphasis not only upon men, but also upon literary movements, the causes of which are thoroughly investigated. Further, the relation of each period of American literature to the corresponding epoch of English literature has been carefully brought out—and each period is illuminated by a brief survey of its history. ¶ The seven chapters of the book treat in succession of Colonial Literature, The Emergence of a Nation (1754-1809), the New York Group, The New England Group, Southern Literature, Western Literature, and the Eastern Realists. To these are added a supplementary list of less important authors and their chief works, as well as A Glance Backward, which emphasizes in brief compass the most important truths taught by American literature. ¶ At the end of each chapter is a summary which helps to fix the period in mind by briefly reviewing the most significant achievements. This is followed by extensive historical and literary references for further study, by a very helpful list of suggested readings, and by questions and suggestions, designed to stimulate the student's interest and enthusiasm, and to lead him to study and investigate further for himself the remarkable literary record of American aspiration and accomplishment.

AMERICAN BOOK COMPANY
(S. 318)

TEACHERS' OUTLINES FOR STUDIES IN ENGLISH

Based on the Requirements for Admission to College

By GILBERT SYKES BLAKELY, A.M., Instructor in English in the Morris High School, New York City.

THIS little book is intended to present to teachers plans for the study of the English texts required for admission to college. These Outlines are full of inspiration and suggestion, and will be welcomed by every live teacher who hitherto, in order to avoid ruts, has been obliged to compare notes with other teachers, visit classes, and note methods. The volume aims not at a discussion of the principles of teaching, but at an application of certain principles to the teaching of some of the books most generally read in schools.

¶ The references by page and line to the book under discussion are to the texts of the Gateway Series; but the Outlines can be used with any series of English classics.

¶ Certain brief plans of study are developed for the general teaching of the novel, narrative poetry, lyric poetry, the drama, and the essay. The suggestions are those of a practical teacher, and follow a definite scheme in each work to be studied. There are discussions of methods, topics for compositions, and questions for review. The lists of questions are by no means exhaustive, but those that are given are suggestive and typical.

¶ The appendix contains twenty examinations in English, for admission to college, recently set by different colleges in both the East and the West.

AMERICAN BOOK COMPANY
(S.87)

WEBSTER'S SECONDARY SCHOOL DICTIONARY

Full buckram, 8vo, 864 pages. Containing over 70,000 words, with 1000 illustrations.

THIS NEW DICTIONARY is based on Webster's New International Dictionary and therefore conforms to the best present usage. It presents the largest number of words and phrases ever included in a school dictionary —all those, however new, likely to be needed by any pupil. It is a reference book for the reader and a guide in the use of English, both oral and written. It fills every requirement that can be expected of a dictionary of moderate size.

¶ This new book gives the preference to forms of spelling now current in the United States. In the matter of pronunciation such alternatives are included as are in very common use. Each definition is in the form of a specific statement accompanied by one or more synonyms, between which careful discrimination is made.

¶ In addition, this dictionary includes an unusual amount of supplementary information of value to students: the etymology, syllabication and capitalization of words; many proper names from folklore, mythology, and the Bible; a list of prefixes and suffixes; all irregularly inflected forms; rules for spelling; 2329 lists of synonyms, in which 3518 words are carefully discriminated; answers to many questions on the use of correct English constantly asked by pupils; a guide to pronunciation; abbreviations used in writing and printing; a list of 1200 foreign words and phrases; a dictionary of 5400 proper names of persons and places, etc.

AMERICAN BOOK COMPANY

(S. 108)

Learn verses -

C0-BNW-538